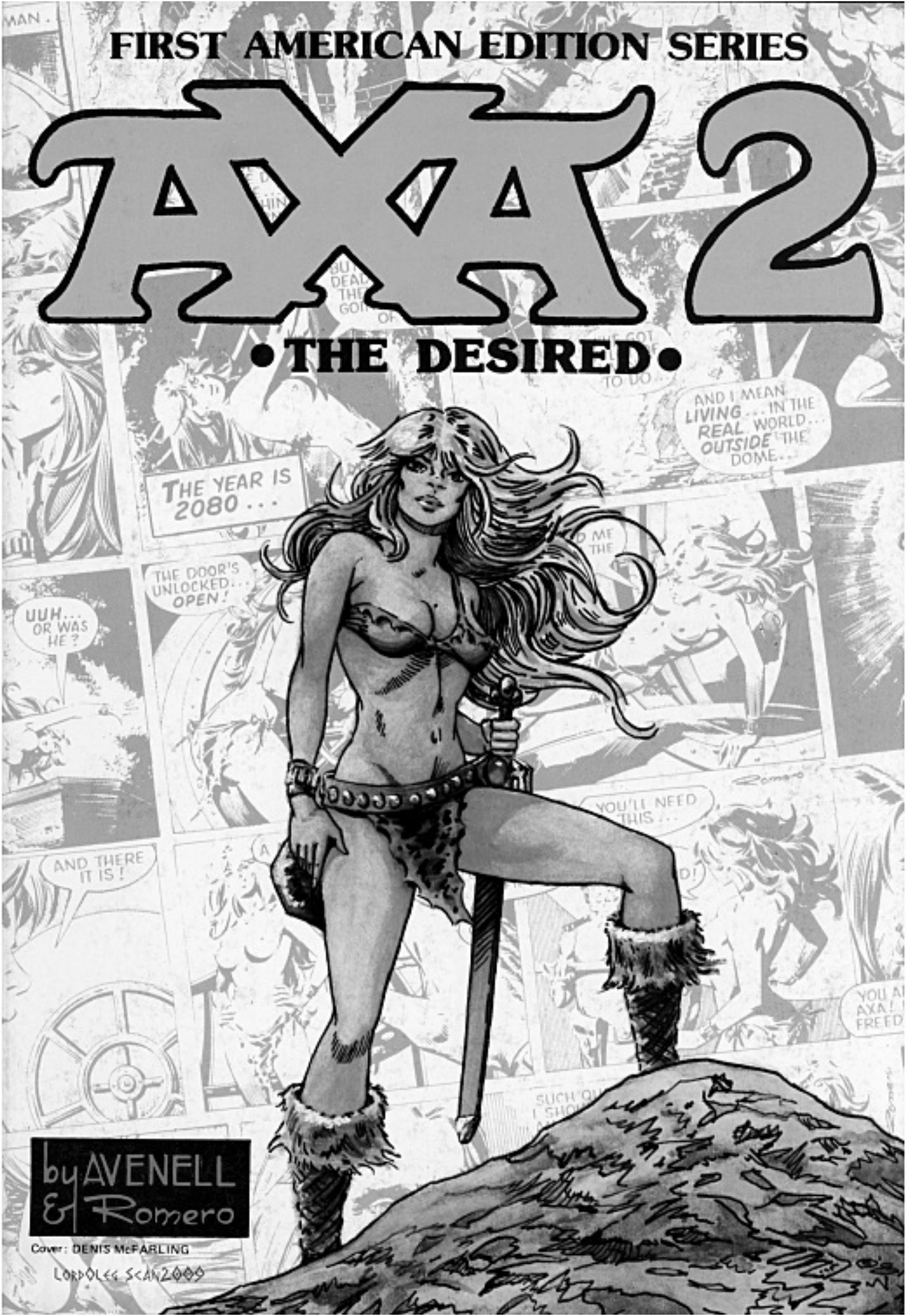
FIRST AMERICAN EDITION SERIES

AXA 2

•THE DESIRED•


THE YEAR IS 2080 . . .
AND I MEAN LIVING . . . IN THE REAL WORLD . . . OUTSIDE THE DOME . . .
THE DOOR'S UNLOCKED . . . OPEN!
UUH . . . OR WAS HE?
AND THERE IT IS!
YOU'LL NEED THIS . . .
Romero

by AVENELL & Romero

Cover: DENIS McFARLING

LORDOLEG SCAN2009

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION SERIES

AXA

•THE DESIRED•

by Donne Avenell and Enrique Romero

Edited by Catherine Yronwode

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AXA

INTRODUCTION by catherine yronwode

Here we are again, with the second volume of *Axa*. Response to the first collection of this British comic strip was overwhelmingly positive, and many readers asked for more. It looks like they will get their wish too, as we intend to continue reprinting the series in a set of matching volumes, just like this one.

What makes *Axa* so appealing? Is it the science fiction or the sex? Maybe it's a little bit of both.

The influences which formed *Axa* are rather obvious, perhaps, but noteworthy nonetheless. First, there is the post-holocaust world in which the series is set: a mainstay of science fiction stories for years. It combines the delicate nuances of moral guilt (if the holocaust comes, it will be *our* fault) with the requisite arena in which to stage an all-out life-or-death adventure series. *Logan's Run*, with its city-domes and partially contaminated wilderness, can probably be cited as the direct inspiration for the world Axa lives in. Not a startlingly original setting, but a more than serviceable one.

The second major influence on the direction Donne Avenell and Enrique Romero took in creating the strip was, without a doubt, the long-standing British tradition of baring the breasts of heroines in newspaper comics. To American eyes, this may seem more exploitive or provocative than necessary, but in England it is commonplace enough to rate little more than an appreciative nod from the male sector of the audience. Female readers are not slighted either; there are certainly enough half-naked *men* in *Axa* to satisfy the womanly portion of the readership.

Who is Axa? Well, if appearances count for much, she is none other than Brigitte Bardot. Romero is not the first cartoonist to base a character's features on those of a famous actor or actress, and he does a very pretty job of it indeed.

Photo: Continental Film Review

Barbarella © Jean-Claude Forest

Bardot in a world of future terror and adventure brings to mind another classic comic strip: Jean-Claude Forest's *Barbarella*, a 1960s series which seemingly starred Bardot, and which, come to think of it, also contained its share of nudity – so much so that in the United States it was published by Grove Press, known at the time for reprinting erotic literature of historic value. Of course, when *Barbarella* was made into a film, it was Jane Fonda, not Bardot, who played the starring role, but Fonda never looked more sex-kittenish than when portraying that particular character.

It is into this mold – post-holocaust sex-kitten adventure – that Axa seems to fit, but despite the amount of skin shown, this is not merely a "good girl art" or "girlie" feature. Axa is a heroine, and her adventures in the frightening world of the city-domes and contaminated wilderness are proof that she is a bit more than a convenient excuse to sneak a little thrill into the morning paper. The story-line follows a close continuity, as do most adventure strips. For those who came in late, a synopsis might be of help:

In book one, which led off from the very beginning of the series, we saw Axa leave the regimented life of her dome, leave her lover, Jon, and venture out in search of "freedom," a concept she valued, but could scarcely define in terms of her prior experience.

Wandering into an area of wilderness controlled by "the Middle People," Axa immediately ran afoul of their bizarre culture. The Middle People, led by their leader, May-or, spent their lives in blind worship of the pre-holocaust "Old People," whose wars had brought them to the degradation they now lived in. Axa's newfound freedom was abruptly violated because she viewed herself as an independent being, while the Middle People, bound by laws which decreed that women are subservient to men and that sexual pleasure is forbidden outside of reproduction, would not tolerate her. One man of this tribe, Matt, fell in love with her, but his conditioning was so strong that he could not understand her desire to live outside his laws. He eventually betrayed her to May-or. Put into a "mothering center" as a prospective breeder, Axa finally escaped when a band of mutants and misfits raided the center in search of women with which to improve their own genetic stock.

Following after the now-repentant Matt, Axa set off to rescue the Middle Women captured by the mutants, but she was in turn taken prisoner and brought before their leader, Burt. After an abortive rape attempt, Burt confessed that he was actually in love with Axa. This display of "weakness" on his part infuriated his lieutenant, a character so deformed he could have served as an understudy for

Frankenstein's monster. Matt showed up at this point, and the two made their escape while Burt fought with his outraged second-in-command. Pursued through the ruined city by hordes of B-movie extra types, Matt and Axa made their last stand in a derelict bowling alley. Certain death awaited them as the mutant killers closed in, but at the last instant Burt arrived and made good on his love for Axa by sacrificing himself so that she and Matt could make their getaway.

Story number two, "The Chosen," opened with Axa trailing Matt home to the land of the Middle People. She really had no other place to go, after all, even though she knew Matt's love was overbalanced by his dedication to his tribe's repressive laws. True to form, Matt allowed her to join him and then betrayed her again. This time, her sword taken from her, she was locked into a "shrine," where it was hoped she would be "venerated, not copied" by the servile women of the tribe. Breaking free, Axa went to Matt's hut to reclaim her sword. Once there, she succumbed to her passion for him, and vice versa.

Discovered after their night of illicit love, the two were attacked by the entire tribe. Matt, wounded in the fray, escaped with Axa, but died of his injuries a short while later. Axa had little time to mourn the loss of her inconstant lover before she was attacked by a swarm of giant mutant bees. That menace safely foiled, she wandered into a graveyard of The Old People where, much to her surprise, she was met by her dome-dwelling lover, Jon. She sank wearily into his waiting arms, but awoke to find him a traitor and herself surrounded by the armed guards he had summoned.

Taken back to the dome, Axa was "sanitized," "depersonalized" with drugs, dressed in a uniform, and brought before the dome's Controller for interrogation. As the drugs wore off, she overpowered the Controller and tried to escape, but was foiled by a variety of mechanical traps in her path. Her "escape," and the gantlet she ran was in fact arranged by the dome's Director. Watching her progress on a monitor, he engineered one final test – the temptation of security and love, as personified by Jon. Caressing her and offering her "peace of mind . . . pleasure for the body . . . gratification of the senses" if she would put on a regulation uniform, Jon tried his best, but Axa once more escaped – straight into the Director's private sanctum. There the tests were explained: the Director needed a person of great strength and personal initiative to undertake a mission across the sea on his behalf. In token of his good faith, he returned to Axa her sword, and she accepted the assignment. It is here that *Axa Vol. 1* ended – and our present volume takes up the thread of this story.

Read on – and enjoy.

As usual, your letters of comment about our reprint line are much appreciated. Want to see more of Axa? Drop us a note and let us know! Look for more *Modesty Blaise* and *Mike Hammer* comics soon, and expect a few new titles along the way.

AXA
the desired
WAIT, AXA! YOU'LL NEED AN ESCORT TO THE COAST!
AXA LEAVES THE DOMED CITY ON THE FIRST STAGE OF HER MISSION ACROSS THE SEA...
AN ESCORT? ME?

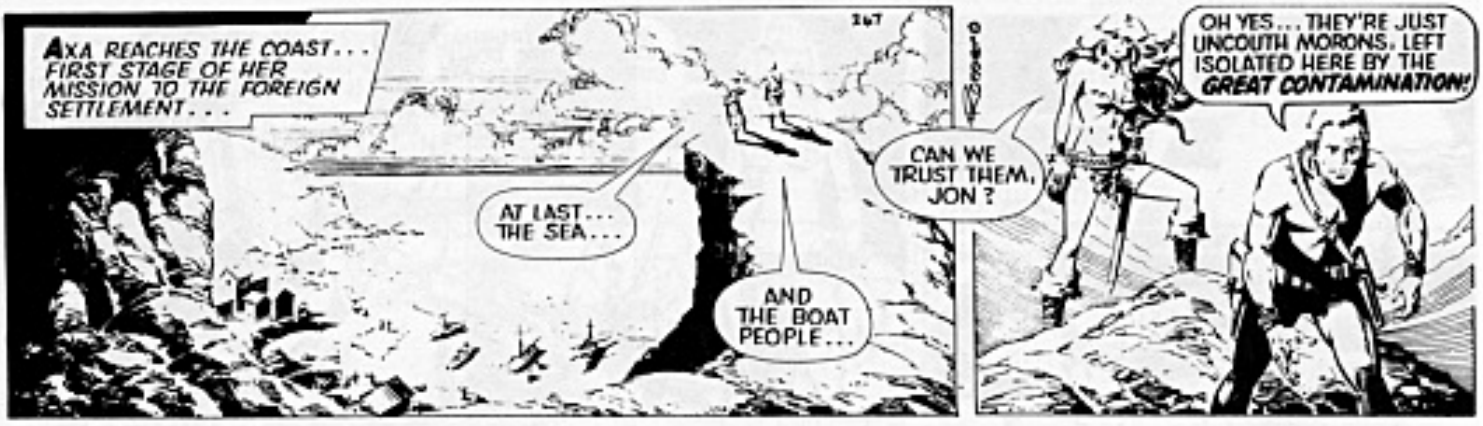
THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL AN ESCORT? JON?
I KNOW YOU DESPISE ME, AXA...
BUT I CAN BARGAIN WITH THE BOAT PEOPLE FOR YOUR PASSAGE ACROSS THE SEA...
HUH!
THE BOAT PEOPLE MAY TRUST YOU... I DON'T!

I'M ONLY GOING WITH YOU AS FAR AS THE COAST, AXA...
THAT'S ONE CONSOLATION!
AT LEAST I TRUST THIS MAP THE DOME DIRECTOR'S GIVEN ME ...AND HIS LETTER TO THE FOREIGN SETTLEMENT I HAVE TO REACH...
SCARED OF THE DARK, JON?
OF COURSE NOT... BUT MAYBE WE OUGHT TO FIND SHELTER FOR THE NIGHT...

YOU PEOPLE OF THE DOME ARE ALL ALIKE... TIMID AND FEEBLE! THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN SENT ON THIS MISSION...
LONDON SYDNEY NEW YORK
CROSS-BREEDING WITH THE FOREIGN SETTLERS COULD PUT SOME BACKBONE INTO YOU, THE DOME DIRECTOR THINKS...
I TELL YOU I'M NOT SCARED, AXA!
NO? LET'S GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO PROVE IT. THEN...

SKREEEEEK!
IF YOU'RE NOT SCARED, JON... THEN THIS WON'T WORRY YOU...
H-HUH?
IT'S ONLY A MUTANT BAT!
H-HELP!
HA-HA-HA!

POOR JON... YOU REALLY ARE A WEAKLING! BUT THAT WAS CRUEL OF ME...
LET ME SLEEP NEAR YOU, AXA...
I SEEM TO HAVE HEARD THAT BEFORE...
BUT FROM MEN WANTING LOVE... NOT CHILDREN NEEDING COMFORT!


AXA REACHES THE COAST... FIRST STAGE OF HER MISSION TO THE FOREIGN SETTLEMENT...
AT LAST... THE SEA...
AND THE BOAT PEOPLE...
CAN WE TRUST THEM, JON?
OH YES... THEY'RE JUST UNCOUTH MORONS, LEFT ISOLATED HERE BY THE GREAT CONTAMINATION!

BUT THESE BOAT PEOPLE LOOK... HARD...
THEY HAVE TO BE... THEY LIVE OFF THE SEA...
AND THE OLD PEOPLE EMPTIED THE SEA OF FISH... BEFORE THEY CONTAMINATED IT WITH THEIR NUCLEAR WASTE...
SO BE CAREFUL, JON...
DON'T WORRY, AXA! I KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THEM!

YOU THERE! WE NEED A BOAT AND CREW! THE WOMAN HAS TO CROSS THE SEA!
NO WOMAN OF THE DOME, THIS... SHOWS HER BODY...
... NICE SOFT BODY, SHE'S GOT...
AND A GOOD HARD SWORD!

DO I HAVE TO USE MY SWORD TO GET A BOAT?
NO NEED FOR THAT, AXA... I'VE BROUGHT DRUGS AND FOOD TO BARTER WITH THESE BOAT PEOPLE..
WE CAN'T SAIL YET, ANYWAY... IT'S LOW WATER...
YOU CAN SHELTER IN THE NET-HOUSE TILL THE TIDE RISES...

DO WE HAVE TO WAIT IN HERE TILL YOU'RE READY TO SAIL?
DON'T ARGUE WITH THE MAN, AXA... HE COULD GET NASTY...
I THOUGHT YOU DESPISED THESE BOAT PEOPLE, JON?
I SAID THEY WERE MORONS. I'D RATHER DO BUSINESS WITH THEM THAN FIGHT THEM
THIS WOULD BE A ROTTEN PLACE TO FIGHT IN, ANYWAY...

MAYBE THAT'S WHY THE BOAT PEOPLE TOLD US TO WAIT IN HERE... SO THEY'D HAVE US AT A DISADVANTAGE...
NOW YOU'RE WORRYING ABOUT NOTHING, AXA! THOSE MORONS HAVEN'T GOT THE INTELLIGENCE TO TRAP US!
THE NETS! DROPPING ON US!
HUH?

AXA AND JON TRAPPED BY THE BOAT PEOPLE...
THE MORONS WERE CLEVERER THAN YOU THOUGHT, JON... CURSE THEM AND YOU!
AND CURSE THIS NET! I CAN'T EVEN DRAW MY SWORD!
HUR! WE MADE A GOOD CATCH, SEM!
BUT IT NEEDS GUTTING...
I'LL TAKE THE DOME MAN...
NO! PLEASE DON'T HURT ME!
LET ME GO! YOU CAN HAVE MY DRUGS AND FOOD! AND DO WHAT YOU LIKE WITH THE WOMAN!
DON'T WORRY... HUR... I WILL...
KICK ALL YOU LIKE, PRETTY! FISH AND WOMEN ...THEY'RE BETTER FRESH!
DON'T PLAY WITH HER, ROG... KILL HER! IF SHE GETS BACK ALIVE TO THE DOMED CITY, WE'LL BE IN TROUBLE!
YOU'LL BE IN TROUBLE ANYWAY... WHEN I GET MY SWORD FREE...
SO YOU WANT TO PLAY ROUGH? YOU ASKED FOR IT, PRETTY!
I'M HELL WITH A GUTTING KNIFE...
QUICK, SON!
GAH!

ANOTHER ONE, HUH? SO NOW YOU BOAT PEOPLE ARE FIGHTING OVER ME?
NO...
WE FIGHT FOR YOU... AND WE DON'T BELONG TO THESE BOAT PEOPLE...
WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE, ROG?
LEAVE HIM TO ME, SON...

GUH!
WE DON'T MOLEST WOMEN IN MY COUNTRY...
YOU COME FROM ACROSS THE SEA?
YES...
AND WE'D BETTER GET BACK THERE, SON... BEFORE THE REST OF THESE BOAT PEOPLE GANG UP ON US...

AXA RESCUED FROM THE BOAT PEOPLE BY TWO FOREIGNERS...
I HAVE TO CROSS THE SEA MYSELF... ON A MISSION FROM THE DOMED CITY...
THEN YOU CAN SAIL WITH US...
WAIT! I'VE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING! OR RATHER ...SOMEONE...
JON'S STILL ALIVE! AM I GLAD... OR DON'T I CARE?

JON!
LEAVE ME ALONE! I DON'T WANT TO KNOW!
YOU'RE TROUBLE, AXA! YOU TAKE A MAN OUT OF HIS DEPTH! I'M GOING BACK TO THE DOME!
LET HIM GO! IT'S NOT JUST ME HE'S RUNNING AWAY FROM... IT'S LIFE...

THE TIDE'S RISING. TIME WE SAILED
JON TOOK THE DRUGS WITH HIM... I CAN'T PAY YOU FOR MY PASSAGE...
WE DON'T NEED PAY. YOU'RE A WOMAN... IN NEED...
261
A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, TOO! FOR US, A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE YOU!

ARE THEY ALL LIKE YOU, ACROSS THE SEA?
WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT ME?
262
YOU'RE STRONG, CHIVALROUS... GENTLE. YOU MAKE A WOMAN FEEL... CHERISHED...
HELP ME WITH THE ROPES, BOY! THE BOAT NEEDS HANDLING, AS WELL AS THE WOMAN!

I THINK I'M GOING TO LIKE THIS NEW COUNTRY, ACROSS THE SEA!
263
BUT IT'S A BETTER COUNTRY THAN MINE, ISN'T IT?
SAME CONTAMINATION... ...SAME DESERT OF ATOMIC DUST... DIFFERENT KINDS OF SETTLEMENT, MAYBE...
WE HAVE TO GET THERE FIRST, WOMAN... AND THE WIND'S RISING ... A STORM BLOWING UP...

MY MISSION IS TO ONE OF YOUR SETTLEMENTS! TELL ME ABOUT THEM...
THIS IS NO TIME FOR TALK, WOMAN...
264
IF THIS STORM GETS ANY WORSE... WE COULD BE FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES...
KRAAK!
OHH!

OUR SAIL'S GONE! WE'RE BROACHING-TO!
UUH...
THE BOAT'S SINKING, WOMAN! JUMP OVERBOARD WITH ME! IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!
265

WAIT! YOUR FATHER'S IN TROUBLE!
I'M TRAPPED, SON! DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME ON ME! SAVE THE WOMAN!
NO! MAYBE WE CAN FREE YOU!
266

I TELL YOU THERE'S NO HOPE FOR ME! SAVE YOURSELF, WOMAN!
NO! I CAN'T LEAVE YOU HERE TO DIE!
I'LL GO DOWN WITH MY BOAT... A GOOD DEATH...
NO DEATH IS GOOD... IF IT CAN BE PREVENTED...
267
GRAAAK!
AHH...

FATHER!
HE'S GONE!
UUH...
NOW I'M GOING, TOO...
268

AXA IS WASHED OVERBOARD AS THE BOAT BREAKS UP...
HANG ON, WOMAN! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DROWN IF I CAN HELP IT!
GUH...
I'M HERE!

WHEN DAWN BREAKS...
IT'S NO GOOD... I CAN'T FIGHT ANY MORE... LEAVE ME AND SAVE YOURSELF...
WE'RE BOTH GOING TO BE SAVED... LOOK...!
ON THE HORIZON... AN ISLAND!

THE SEA'S GETTING ROUGHER...
ONLY THE UNDERTOW FROM THE ISLAND...
I DON'T KNOW THESE WATERS... NEVER SAW THE PLACE BEFORE...
WHAT KIND OF AN ISLAND IS IT?
IN THE ROCKS ABOVE THE BEACH... I SWEAR SOMETHING MOVED...

HUH?
GO BACK, STRANGERS!
WE CAN'T GO BACK! THERE'S ONLY THE SEA BEHIND US!
NO OUTSIDER SETS FOOT ON THIS ISLAND... AND LIVES...
YOU'VE BEEN WARNED...
BANG!

THEY'RE FIRING RIFLES... A WEAPON OF THE OLD PEOPLE'S...
SO RUN!
BUT WHAT KIND OF MEN ARE THEY?
HEALTHY MEN... AND WE MEAN TO STAY THAT WAY...
AAH!
GET UNDER COVER, WOMAN! NO NEED FOR US BOTH TO DIE!
YOU'VE BEEN HIT!
YOU HEARD THAT? ONE OF THEM'S A FEMALE!
SO WHAT? THEY CARRY DISEASE TOO, DON'T THEY?
THE OLD PEOPLE'S WEAPONS... THE OLD PEOPLE'S PHILOSOPHY... ANYTHING YOU'RE AFRAID OF, KILL!
STOP SHOOTING, YOU FOOLS!
HOPE FOR ME, YET?
SOMEONE ELSE COMING... A MAN WITH AUTHORITY... AND MERCY...
PUT YOUR GUNS DOWN! THERE'S BEEN ENOUGH KILLING ON THIS ISLAND!
A YOUNG MAN... HANDSOME... WEARING CLOTHES LIKE THE OLD PEOPLE'S...
THE NAME'S JASON ARKADY!

YOU'RE SO GOOD-LOOKING, JASON ARKADY, I ALMOST FORGOT... THAT YOU'RE A KILLER!
I'M ONLY WOUNDED, AXA... A BULLET OF THE OLD PEOPLE'S, IN MY LEG...
WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS ISLAND... THAT YOU SHOOT STRANGERS TO KEEP THEM OFF IT?
Romero
277

SMITH! LOMAX! CARRY THIS WOUNDED MAN TO THE BIG HOUSE, AND LOOK AFTER HIM!
BUT THEY'RE... OLD MEN!
EVERYONE'S OLD ON THIS ISLAND, EXCEPT ME...
...AND NOW YOU...
Romero
278

Romero
YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION... WHAT KIND OF AN ISLAND IS THIS?
A PRIVATE ONE...
PRIVACY IS IMPORTANT TO MY GRANDFATHER, HECTOR ARKADY... YOU COULD CALL IT A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH...
SO HE'LL BE ASKING THE QUESTIONS, AND YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE THE ANSWERS...
...WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?
279

MY NAME'S AXA. I WAS BORN IN THE DOMED CITY, THAT MAKES ME GENETICALLY PURE... ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE... AND A PRISONER...
I ESCAPED FROM THE DOME...
...TO FIND ONLY FRUSTRATION AMONG THE MIDDLE PEOPLE...
...AND HORROR WITH THE MUTANTS IN THE RUINED CITY...
THEN THE RULERS OF THE DOME GAVE ME MY FREEDOM... AND SENT ME ON A MISSION...
Romero
280

AXA HAS TOLD JASON ARKADY HER STORY...
YOU KNOW THE REST. I WAS SHIPWRECKED ON THIS ISLAND OF YOURS... THIS WEIRD ISLAND...
WHAT'S WEIRD ABOUT IT? OUR HOUSE IS BIG, PERHAPS... BUT THEN MY GRANDFATHER IS A MILLIONAIRE...
MONEY COULD BUY ANYTHING IN THE OLD DAYS... EVEN IMMUNITY FROM THE GREAT CONTAMINATION...

YOU MEAN THIS HOUSE... YOU AND YOUR GRANDFATHER ... ARE LIVING RELICS OF THE OLD PEOPLE?
WAIT HERE...
HOW DARE YOU LET THIS WOMAN SET FOOT ON THIS ISLAND, JASON? YOU KNOW MY RULE!
SHE'S GENETICALLY-PURE, GRAND-FATHER... AND TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT HER...
I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN! SHE'S BEAUTIFUL! A SPLENDID SPECIMEN!

WHAT DOES HE MEAN? I'M A WOMAN, NOT A SPECIMEN?
YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE GRANDFATHER, AXA. HE'S NOT USED TO WELCOMING YOUNG PEOPLE TO HIS HOUSE
AND SUCH A YOUNG PERSON! SO FINE A BODY! SUCH HEALTHY FLESH!
AH, FORGIVE ME, MY DEAR. I'M FRIGHTENING YOU. AND THAT'S THE LAST THING I WANT TO DO...

GRANDFATHER'S TRYING TO SAY THAT YOU'RE WELCOME ON HIS ISLAND, AXA. AND I MEAN WELCOME!
LET ME EXPLAIN, MY DEAR...
YOU'RE THE FIRST STRANGER TO ENTER THIS HOUSE IN A HUNDRED YEARS...
THE HOUSE AND EVERYTHING ON THE ISLAND. MY OWN GRANDFATHER MADE SURE IT SURVIVED THE CATAS-TROPHE THAT WRECKED THE REST OF THE WORLD...
SO THE HOUSE WAS HERE BEFORE THE GREAT CONTAMINATION?

I NEEDN'T REMIND YOU HOW THE GREAT CONTAMINATION WIPED OUT THE CIVILISATION OF THE OLD PEOPLE, A HUNDRED YEARS AGO...
FIRST GLOBAL CONFLICT... AND THE CREEPING HORROR OF GERM WARFARE...
THEN THE ULTIMATE DISASTER... ATOMIC WARFARE... THE HYDROGEN BOMB...
THEN THE SHIFTING OF THE EARTH'S AXIS... CLIMACTIC CHAOS...
FINALLY THE LEGACY OF DISASTER... HUNGER, DISEASE, POLLUTION... A HANDFUL OF SCATTERED SURVIVORS LEFT TO PICK UP THE PIECES...
Romero

MAYBE IN THE WHOLE WORLD, ONLY THIS ISLAND HOME OF THE ARKADYS SURVIVED THE HOLOCAUST UNDAMAGED...

YOU MEAN... THIS IS HOW THE OLD PEOPLE LIVED?
YES, AXA... IF THEY WERE MILLIONAIRES...

YOU KEEP USING THAT WORD. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
WE'LL TALK LATER, MY DEAR. RIGHT NOW YOU NEED THE MOTHERLY CARE OF NANNY BUDGE...

LOOK AFTER HER, NANNY!
BLESS YOU, MASTER JASON. I KNOW MY JOB. DIDN'T I CARE FOR YOUR OWN DEAR MOTHER, BEFORE YOU WERE BORN?

THIS IS ALL SO STRANGE... JASON HAS A MOTHER?
HAD, DEAR. SHE DIED. THIS WAS HER BEDROOM...

BUT WHAT'S SO STRANGE ABOUT HAVING A MOTHER?
I NEVER KNEW MINE... FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS ARE FORBIDDEN IN THE DOME...

WE STICK TO THE OLD WAYS HERE, THANK GOODNESS. YOU WON'T BE NEEDING THIS NASTY THING ANY MORE...

HAVE A GOOD SOAK NOW, DEAR. I'LL FIND SOMETHING FOR YOU TO WEAR...
MY WILLPOWER'S GONE... I CAN'T BOTHER TO ARGUE...

I SHOULD THINK NOT! YOU WANT TO LOOK NICE FOR MASTER JASON. DON'T YOU?

AXA ON THE ISLAND OF THE MILLIONAIRE ARKADYS...
AXA! MY GOD... AXA...
WHAT'S WRONG? DIDN'T THE OLD PEOPLE WEAR CLOTHES LIKE THIS?
THEY WORE THEM... BUT I DOUBT IF THEY FILLED THEM LIKE YOU DO...
WHAT'S THAT? ANOTHER RELIC OF THE OLD PEOPLE'S?

IT'S KNOWN AS A MOTORBIKE. THIS ONE'S A HUNDRED YEARS OLD. BUT IT'S NO RELIC...
CLIMB UP BEHIND ME. I'LL TAKE YOU FOR WHAT THE OLD PEOPLE CALLED A THRASH...
THEY LOVED SPEED MAYBE THAT'S WHAT HURRIED THEM TO THEIR DESTRUCTION. BUT I KNOW HOW THEY FELT...

EXCITING, EH?
IT'S... WILD! BUT HOW HAVE YOU KEPT THESE OLD MACHINES RUNNING, FOR A HUNDRED YEARS?
MY GREAT-GREAT GRANDFATHER BATTENED DOWN THE ISLAND WHEN THE GREAT CONTAMINATION CAME...
...STOCK-PILED PETROL AND FOOD, VEHICLES AND BOATS...
AH YES... HE WAS WHAT YOU CALL A MILLIONAIRE. ARE YOU ONE TOO, JASON?
HARDLY!

A MILLIONAIRE WAS SOMEONE WHO HAD A MILLION OR MORE UNITS OF MONEY. THAT'S WHAT THE OLD PEOPLE BARTERED WITH...
WE ARKADYS STILL HAVE THE MILLIONS... BUT NOTHING TO BUY WITH THEM, AND NO ONE TO BUY IT FROM...
DON'T LET JASON DEPRESS YOU, MY DEAR. WE KEEP UP OUR STANDARDS ON THE ISLAND... AS YOU'LL FIND OUT...

TELL NANNY BUDGE WE SHALL BE DRESSING FOR DINNER...
WELL I SHOULD HOPE SO!
I HEARD, DEAR, BUT MR HECTOR MEANS YOU'LL BE WEARING EVENING DRESS, YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO LEARN, HAVEN'T YOU?
293
BUT YOU'LL TEACH ME, WON'T YOU, NANNY? TO THINK AND ACT LIKE ONE OF THE OLD PEOPLE?

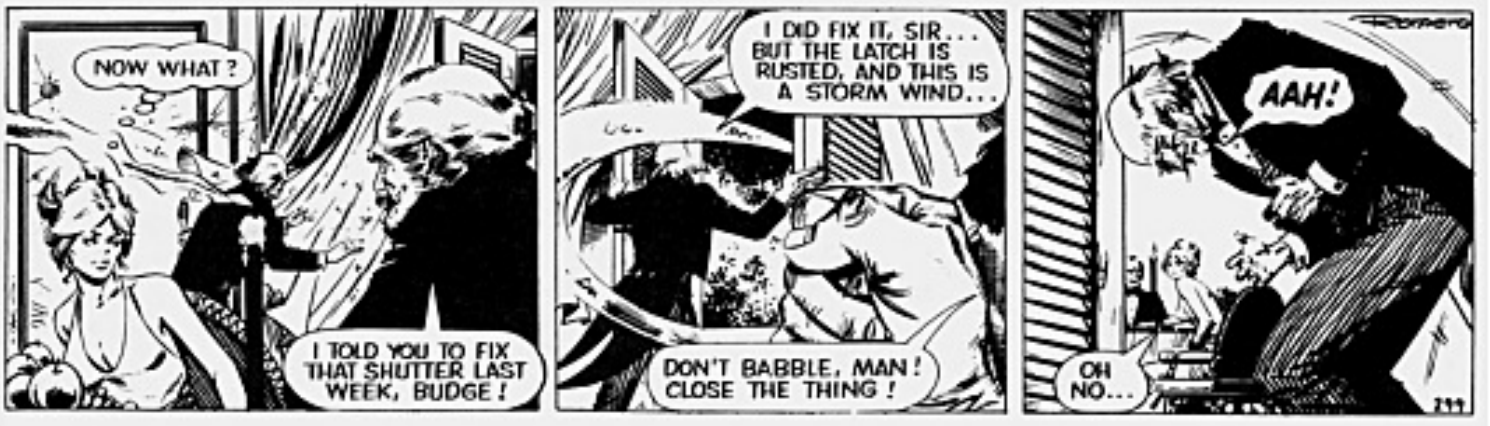
I THOUGHT YOU YOUNGSTERS OF TODAY DESPISED THE OLD PEOPLE?
THEY TAUGHT US TO, IN THE DOME...
294
WELL THEY DESTROYED THEMSELVES, DIDN'T THEY? BUT THEY KNEW HOW TO LIVE, TOO... IF THE ARKADYS ARE ANYTHING TO GO BY...
AND THAT'S WHAT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DO... LIVE!

AXA JOINS HER HOSTS, ON THE ISLAND OF THE MILLIONAIRE ARKADYS...
MY DEAR, YOU LOOK POSITIVELY REGAL...
STUNNING, AXA!
YOU'LL BE A DECIDED ACQUISITION TO OUR LITTLE COMMUNITY...
OH, BUT I'M NOT STAYING..
I MEAN, THERE'S MY MISSION...
WE CAN DISCUSS IT LATER, MY DEAR. TAKE AXA IN TO DINNER, JASON

THIS IS HOW THE OLD PEOPLE ATE? FABULOUS...
297
AS GRANDFATHER'S FOND OF SAYING, AXA, WE TRY TO KEEP UP OUR STANDARDS...
BUT I'M GLAD YOU LIKE THE WAY WE ARKADYS LIVE...
YOU MAY SERVE, BUDGE

I'VE ONLY READ ABOUT THINGS LIKE THIS... THE STYLE, THE ELEGANCE ...IN THE ARCHIVES AT THE DOME...
PLEASE DON'T TELL US ABOUT THE UGLINESS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THIS ISLAND, MY DEAR ... WE PREFER TO IGNORE IT...
297
OH!
WHAT'S WRONG, AXA?

A RAT!
DAMN THE BRUTES! THEY'RE GETTING ALL OVER THE HOUSE!
SO THERE'S UGLINESS EVEN HERE... ON THIS PARADISE ISLAND OF THE ARKADYS...
MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN OFF MY SWORD, AFTER ALL...


NOW WHAT?
I TOLD YOU TO FIX THAT SHUTTER LAST WEEK, BUDGE!
I DID FIX IT, SIR... BUT THE LATCH IS RUSTED, AND THIS IS A STORM WIND...
DON'T BABBLE, MAN! CLOSE THE THING!
AAH!
OH NO...
299

STUPID OLD FOOL!
HE IS OLD... THAT'S THE POINT... TOO OLD TO BE WORKING...
HE'S HAD SOME KIND OF HEART-ATTACK...
WHAT IS IT, AXA?
300
ONE THING YOU AND YOUR GRANDFATHER CAN'T IGNORE, JASON... DEATH...

LET ME LOOK AT HIM...
HE'S DEAD, I TELL YOU!
YES... HIS OLD BODY WAS WORN OUT...
LIKE THIS SHUTTER... AND A LOT OF OTHER THINGS IN THIS ARKADY PARADISE OF YOURS...
SILENCE, GIRL! I WON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF TALK ON MY ISLAND!
Romero

SOMEONE WILL HAVE TO TELL POOR OLD NANNY BUDGE THAT HER HUSBAND'S DEAD...
I'LL DO IT...
OR DOES SHE KNOW ALREADY?
OH! OH!
DRAT THE THING! NOTHING WORKS IN THIS WRETCHED KITCHEN!
NO... IT'S THE TAP THAT'S BOTHERING HER...
Romero

NANNY, I'M SORRY... BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU... THAT YOUR HUSBAND HAS DIED...
THERE'S NO WATER IN THE TAP... THE PUMP'S BROKEN DOWN AGAIN... EVERYTHING'S FALLING TO BITS...
DID YOU HEAR ME, NANNY? DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
LEAVE IT, AXA...

BUT SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO REALISE THAT HER HUSBAND'S DEAD...
SHE WILL...
YES... THE TAP'S WORKING NOW...

THE OLD BUTLER OF THE MILLIONAIRE ARKADYS HAS DIED SUDDENLY...
YOU'VE HAD A SHOCK, AXA... YOU NEED SLEEP...
UNLESS...
NO, JASON! WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM! AN ANIMAL?

BUT WE'RE ALL ANIMALS... AND WE'VE ALL GOT TO DIE, LIKE POOR OLD BUDGE...
MILLIONS HAVE DIED, AND ARE DYING STILL, LESS NATURALLY... OUTSIDE IN THE CONTAMINATED WORLD...
NEXT DAY... THE BURIAL...
AND THIS DEATH ON THE ARKADYS' ISLAND, AT LEAST, HAS DIGNITY ... SO WHY DOES IT DISTURB ME SO?

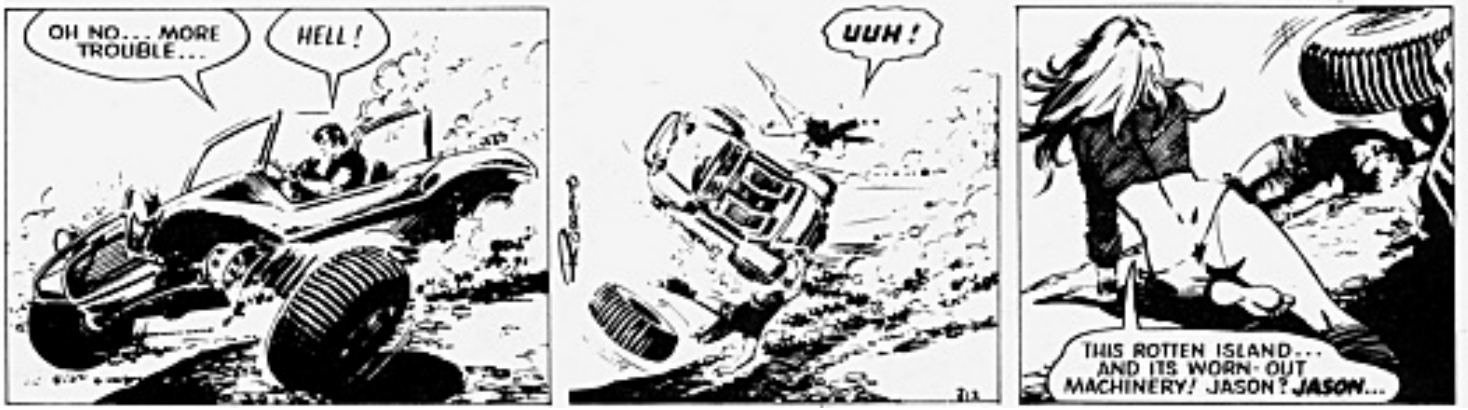
MAYBE IT'S NOT OLD BUDGE'S DEATH THAT'S MADE ME UNEASY... BUT SOMETHING ELSE...
SOMETHING ABOUT THIS ISLAND PARADISE OF THE MILLIONAIRE ARKADYS ... ISOLATED FROM THE HORRORS OF THE CONTAMINATED WORLD OUTSIDE...
YES, THAT'S IT! THE PEOPLE!

WHAT'S WRONG, AXA?
I'VE JUST REALISED... THE PEOPLE ON THIS ISLAND OF YOURS... EVERY ONE OF THEM IS OLD...
I'M NOT OLD, AXA...
YOU'RE THE ONLY YOUNG ONE ON THE ISLAND, JASON...
BUT NOW YOU'RE HERE TOO... WITH ME...

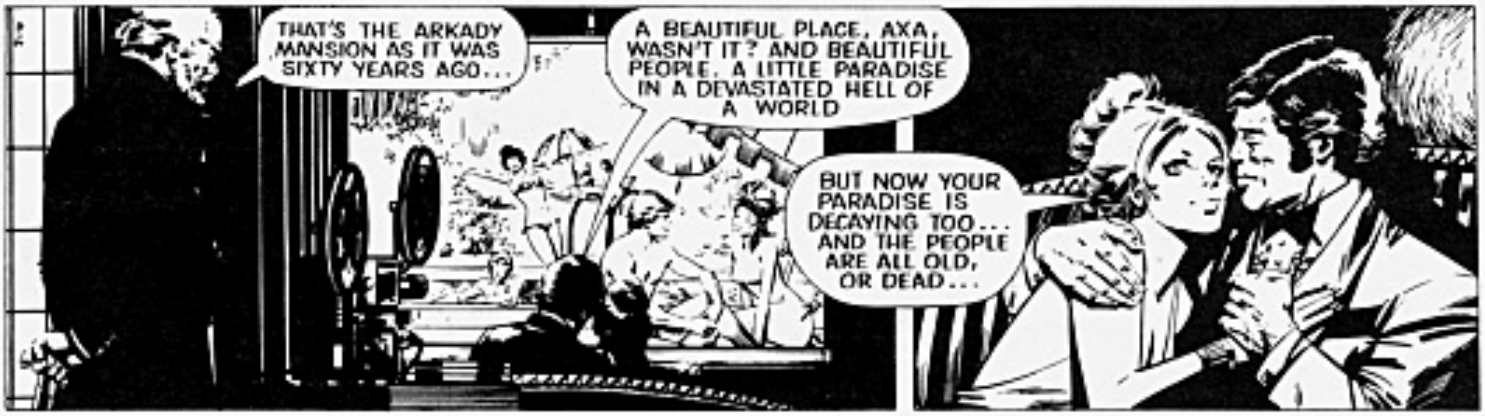
I CAN'T STAY HERE ON THE ISLAND... I'VE GOT A MISSION, REMEMBER?
BUT YOU NEEDN'T LEAVE YET. YOU COULD RELAX FOR A FEW DAYS, A WEEK, MAYBE. FOR MY SAKE, AXA...
THE LAZY DAYS PASS...
YOU MAKE ME FORGET EVERYTHING, JASON... WHEN YOU SMILE AT ME LIKE THAT...
...EXCEPT THAT I'M A WOMAN...

AXA RELAXES ON THE ISLAND OF THE MILLIONAIRE ARKADYS...
UGH!
THE WATER'S SPARKLING... BUT HIDDEN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE POOL... MUD AND WEEDS AND SLIME...

SORRY, AXA... I FORGOT TO WARN YOU... THE FILTRATION PLANT IS OUT OF ORDER...
LIKE A LOT OF OTHER THINGS ON THIS ISLAND...
ANOTHER DAY...
YOU'RE WORRYING AGAIN! DON'T! COME FOR A RIDE IN THE BEACH-BUGGY!
OH JASON...
I KNOW WHY THE OLD PEOPLE WERE HOOKED ON SPEED NOW ... IT'S A DRUG THAT STOPS YOU THINKING...


OH NO... MORE TROUBLE...
HELL!
UUH!
THIS ROTTEN ISLAND... AND ITS WORN-OUT MACHINERY! JASON? JASON...

OH, JASON... I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD...
I'LL BE ALL RIGHT...
ESPECIALLY NOW THAT I KNOW YOU CARE...
SAY IT STRAIGHT OUT, BOY! SHE'S FALLEN IN LOVE WITH YOU!
THIS CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION! AND I'VE GOT A TREAT FOR YOU, AXA! WHAT THOSE OLD PEOPLE YOU'RE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT CALLED A MOVIE SHOW...


THAT'S THE ARKADY MANSION AS IT WAS SIXTY YEARS AGO...
A BEAUTIFUL PLACE, AXA, WASN'T IT? AND BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE. A LITTLE PARADISE IN A DEVASTATED HELL OF A WORLD
BUT NOW YOUR PARADISE IS DECAYING TOO... AND THE PEOPLE ARE ALL OLD, OR DEAD...

BUT SOME OF THOSE PEOPLE HAD CHILDREN... AND GRANDCHILDREN ...LIKE JASON THERE, AS HE WAS TWENTY YEARS AGO...
NOW I KNOW WHY YOUR GRANDFATHER WANTED TO SHOW ME THESE OLD MOVIES, JASON...
SENTIMENTAL OLD THING, ISN'T HE?
HELL! THE POWER'S FAILED!
BACK TO REALITY...

THE GENERATOR MUST HAVE BROKEN DOWN AGAIN, GRANDFATHER...
I KNOW THAT! GET IT REPAIRED!
ONE DAY YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO REPAIR YOUR MACHINES, JASON. WHAT THEN?
WE'LL WORRY ABOUT THAT WHEN THE TIME COMES...
I'LL HAVE IT PATCHED UP IN AN HOUR OR TWO, YOUNG MASTER... BUT ITS ON ITS LAST LEGS, LIKE ME...

GRANDFATHER WILL BE BAD COMPANY TILL THE GENERATOR'S WORKING AGAIN ... LET'S TAKE A WALK DOWN TO THE BOAT-HOUSE...
YOU CAN'T WALK AWAY FROM THE FACTS, JASON... YOUR ISLAND PARADISE IS FALLING TO BITS...
MAYBE...
BUT RIGHT NOW I'VE GOT OTHER THINGS ON MY MIND... THE MOONLIGHT, AXA... AND YOU...

AND HERE'S ONE CRAFT THAT'S IN FULL WORKING ORDER... THE SEAGOING YACHT...
FOUR GENERATIONS OF ARKADYS HAVE LAVISHED THEIR CARE ON HER... IN CASE WE EVER NEED TO SAIL AWAY FROM THIS ISLAND...
WE CAN BE ALONE HERE, AXA. I NEED TO BE ALONE WITH YOU, SO BADLY..

OH, JASON... YOU KNOW I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU...
I NEVER MET A MAN LIKE YOU BEFORE ... IN THE BRUTAL WORLD OUTSIDE ... A MAN SO CIVILISED...
I DON'T FEEL CIVILISED AT THIS MOMENT, AXA...

OH, JASON...
I WANT YOU, AXA...
..YES... YES...
BUT— WAIT!

HELL!
A MAN! WATCHING US!

COME BACK, AXA!
WHY? YOU KNOW WHO THE MAN IS?

YES! JASON DID KNOW! IT'S HIS GRAND-FATHER!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHY WERE YOU SPYING ON ME?
A HARD WORD, MY DEAR... FOR A NATURAL ANXIETY...

DON'T YOU THINK I'VE WORRIED ABOUT JASON... THE ONLY YOUNG PERSON ON THIS ISLAND OF OLD AND BARREN PEOPLE...

BARREN?
CHILDREN ARE WHAT WE NEED! A NEW GENERATION OF ARKADYS! AND YOU CAN GIVE THEM TO US!

SO THAT'S WHY YOU DIDN'T KILL ME WHEN I ARRIVED ON THE ISLAND! BECAUSE I WAS GOOD BREEDING STOCK!

OH I DO, JASON! YOU NEVER REALLY LOVED ME AT ALL!
AXA, TRY TO UNDER-STAND...

ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS THIS PATHETIC ARKADY HERITAGE OF YOURS! ALL YOU WANT ARE CHILDREN TO REVITALISE IT!

WELL I'M NOT STAYING ON THE ISLAND TO HELP YOU BREATHE LIFE INTO A CORPSE!

STOP HER!
YOU TRY, GRANDFATHER! IT WAS YOU WHO DROVE HER AWAY!

NO ONE'S GOING TO STOP ME!
THERE'S A GREAT BIG SUFFERING WORLD OUTSIDE THIS COSY LITTLE ISLAND, AND THAT'S WHERE I BELONG!

AXA RUNS BACK ALONE TO THE ARKADY MANSION . . .
I WAS A FOOL TO FALL IN LOVE WITH JASON!
ALL HE WANTED WAS MY BODY... AND THE CHILDREN HE COULD FATHER!
A NEW GENERATION OF ARKADYS, TO INHERIT THIS FUTILE LITTLE KINGDOM OF THEIRS!

YOU'RE LEAVING US, DEAR? YOU'RE RUNNING AWAY?
NANNY...
YOU'RE ALL I HAD LEFT... NOW OLD BUDGE HAS DIED ON ME... YOU AND MASTER JASON...
I'M SORRY...
I HAVE TO GO...
YES, THAT'S THE WAY OF IT ... THE WORLD OUT THERE IS CALLING YOU . . .

BUT YOU'LL BREAK MASTER JASON'S HEART . . .
AXA!
AXA!
HE HASN'T GOT A HEART! JUST A GRASPING FIST, LIKE HIS GRANDFATHER!

BUT THEY'RE NOT GOING TO KEEP ME HERE IN THIS DECREPIT LITTLE PARADISE OF THEIRS . . .
THERE SHE GOES!
AFTER HER! I WANT HER ALIVE!
THEY'RE HUNTING ME... I MUST FIND SOMEWHERE TO HIDE...

AXA HUNTED BY THE ARKADYS...
THEY NEVER GO NEAR THIS DUMP OF OLD VEHICLES... MAYBE IT REMINDS THEM THAT THEIR ISLAND PARADISE IS FALLING TO BITS...
BUT I CAN LIE LOW HERE, TILL THEY'VE GIVEN UP SEARCHING FOR ME...
OH NO!

A MAN IN HERE!
SSH!
I'M HIDING FROM THOSE ARKADYS, TOO!
THE BOATMAN! BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!

I ASKED OLD HECTOR ABOUT YOU! I WANTED TO HELP YOU! HE SAID YOU'D DIED!
I NEARLY DID, TOO...
THEY LEFT ME TO STARVE BEHIND BARS... BUT THE YOUNG ONE CAME SECRETLY TO FEED ME AND HEAL MY LEG...
HE SMUGGLED ME HERE AND TOLD THEM I WAS DEAD AND BURIED!
THEY BELIEVED HIM... UNTIL NOW...

TWO OF THE OLD KILLERS WITH RIFLES ... COMING THIS WAY...
NO NEED FOR US BOTH TO BE CAUGHT...
WAIT! IT'S ME THEY'RE SEARCHING FOR, NOT YOU!
AND THEY WANT ME ALIVE! THEY'D KILL YOU IF THEY FOUND YOU! STAY THERE!

I'VE GOT ONE FRIEND ON THE ISLAND, ANYWAY... EVEN IF HE'S A HUNTED ANIMAL, LIKE ME ...
THERE'S THE WOMAN!
WE'VE GOT HER TRAPPED!
TELL THE MASTER!

SHE'S HIDING BEHIND THAT TRACTOR!
WE'LL SOON DRAG HER OUT!
NO ONE DRAGS ME ANYWHERE! I GO OF MY OWN FREE WILL!
SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
THE MASTER...

YOU'VE FOUND THE BITCH, EH?
THAT'S ALL I AM TO YOU, HECTOR ARKADY! AN ANIMAL, TO BREED YOUR GRANDCHILDREN!
EXACTLY. BUT AT LEAST WE CAN BE CIVILISED ABOUT IT. PUT THAT RIDICULOUS SWORD AWAY
YOU'RE COMING BACK TO THE HOUSE WITH ME
TO BED WITH JASON? AT THE POINT OF A RIFLE?

AND IF I REFUSE?
YOU'LL MARRY JASON, YES, AND YOU'LL HAVE HIS CHILDREN, ARKADY CHILDREN, TO INHERIT THIS ISLAND..
YOU WON'T, MY DEAR. YOU'LL BE REASONABLE...
OH!
...AFTER A DAY OR TWO IN THIS CELLAR, WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER!

YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!
I CAN DO ANYTHING I WANT... ON THIS ISLAND...
IT'S MY ISLAND... AND ONE DAY IT WILL BE YOUR CHILDREN'S ... IF YOU COME TO YOUR SENSES IN TIME AND MARRY JASON...
IF YOU DON'T... YOU CAN STAY HERE AND ROT...

AXA IMPRISONED IN THE ARKADY MANSION...
LET THEM STARVE ME TO DEATH... I WON'T GIVE IN...
A DAY AND A NIGHT ALONE... BUT NOW SOMEONE COMING...
JASON!
THE GIRL'S STILL SAFELY LOCKED IN THERE, THOMAS?

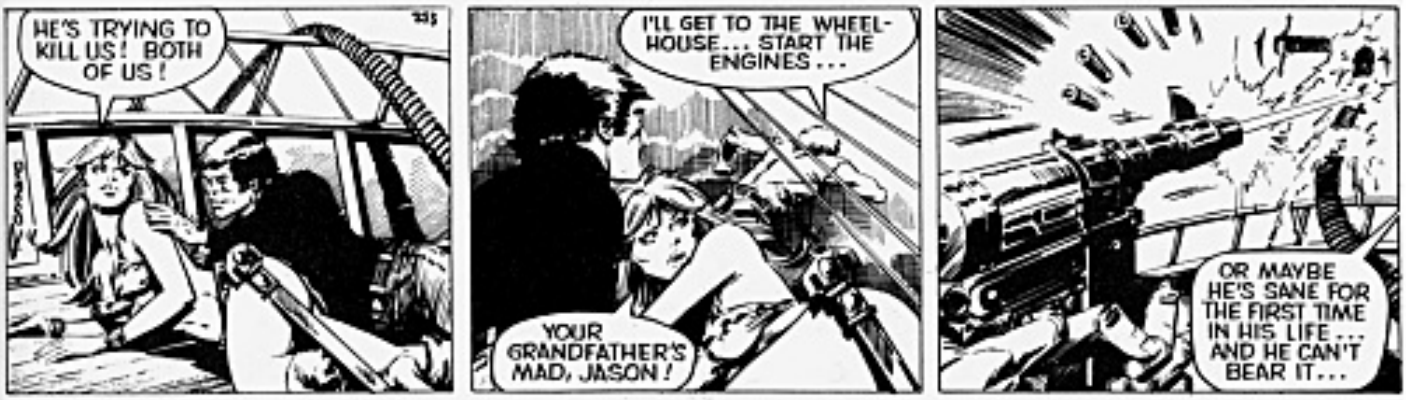
RIGHT...
UUH!
WHAT HAVE YOU COME HERE FOR?
YOU, AXA...
OH, JASON!

BUT I WON'T STAY ON THIS ISLAND! YOUR GRANDFATHER CAN KILL ME FIRST!
HE WON'T, AXA...
HE TRIED TO KILL THAT BOATMAN! HE LEFT HIM TO STARVE, ONLY SOMEONE HELPED THE MAN SECRETLY!
I KNOW...
YOU KNOW?
I WAS THE ONE WHO TOOK THE BOATMAN FOOD ... AND SMUGGLED HIM OUT OF THE HOUSE...

THE BOATMAN TOLD ME THE YOUNG ONE HAD SAVED HIS LIFE... I DIDN'T REALISE HE MEANT YOU...
OH, JASON! YOU HAVE GOT A HEART!
AND I DON'T WANT A BULLET IN IT... SO LET'S GET OUT OF HERE...
YOU'LL HELP ME ESCAPE? TO GET RIGHT OFF THE ISLAND?
I'M GOING WITH YOU, AXA...
OH, JASON! DO YOU MEAN THAT?
I LOVE YOU, AXA. I WANT YOU. BUT NOT THE WAY MY GRANDFATHER PLANNED IT.
YOU WERE RISHT... WE ARKADYS ARE FINISHED... AND SO IS THIS FUTILE LITTLE ISLAND PARADISE OF OURS...
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, MISTER JASON!
OH NO...
DROP THE GUN, LOMAX! I'M ORDERING YOU TO!
YOU DON'T GIVE THE ORDERS ON THIS ISLAND! YOUR GRANDFATHER DOES!
HECTOR ARKADY! I'VE CAUGHT MASTER JASON SNEAKING OFF WITH THAT WOMAN WHO'S HOOKED HIM!
YOU'RE STAYING ON THIS ISLAND, MASTER JASON... WITH YOUR WOMAN, OR WITHOUT HER...
YOU RECKON?
GUH!
THE BOATMAN! I'D FORGOTTEN YOU WERE STILL FREE!
HE WON'T BE FREE MUCH LONGER, AND NOR WILL WE... IF WE DON'T GET GOING...

AXA, JASON AND THE BOATMAN ARE ON THE RUN...
WHERE CAN WE GO, JASON? THERE'S NO HIDING PLACE ON THE ISLAND!
BUT LIKE YOU SAID, AXA, THERE'S A GREAT BIG WORLD OUTSIDE IT...
SPREAD OUT, MEN!
THE HUNTERS ARE COMING!
DOWN, BOTH OF YOU! A FEW PACES APART, AND FLAT IN THE HEATHER!
I LOVE YOU, JASON... WHATEVER HAPPENS...
JUST PRAY THE HUNTERS WALK OVER US...
THEY MISSED US!
NOW WE DOUBLE BACK!
IF WE'RE GOING TO REACH THAT GREAT BIG WORLD OUTSIDE THE ISLAND, JASON, WE'LL NEED A BOAT...
AND THERE SHE IS... MOORED AT THE JETTY...
OF COURSE! THE ARKADY YACHT!
KEPT SEAWORTHY FOR A HUNDRED YEARS, READY FOR JUST SUCH AN EMERGENCY AS THIS!
YOU REALLY MEAN IT, JASON! YOU'RE REALLY SAILING AWAY WITH ME!
I LOVE YOU, AXA...
YOU SAID YOU BELONGED TO THE SUFFERING WORLD OUTSIDE THIS COSY LITTLE ISLAND... AND I BELONG WITH YOU...
AND YOUR GRANDFATHER?
HE'LL HAVE TO SUFFER TOO, WON'T HE?

YOU'RE GIVING UP EVERYTHING, JASON... THE COMFORT AND SAFETY OF THE ARKADY ISLAND... YOUR GRANDFATHER...
...FOR ME?
NO, GIRL, HE'S NOT!
Romero
BRING THE GIRL ASHORE, JASON! IF YOU WANT HER, YOU CAN HAVE HER...
BUT YOU'LL BOTH STAY HERE...ON THE ARKADY ISLAND... AND YOUR CHILDREN WILL BE ARKADYS...
YOU STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND, GRANDFATHER, DO YOU?
Romero
AXA'S RIGHT. THE ARKADYS ARE FINISHED. THIS ISLAND PARADISE WE CREATED HAS BECOME OUR PRISON
I LOVE AXA. AND THERE'S NO FUTURE FOR US HERE. I'M GOING AWAY WITH HER ...OUT INTO THE REAL WORLD...
WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT...
Romero
THE FUEL-TANKS ARE TOPPED UP... WE'RE READY TO GO...
BUT I'M NOT READY TO LET YOU GO...
IF YOU WON'T LIVE HERE ON THE ARKADY ISLAND... THEN DIE HERE!
DOWN, AXA!
Romero


HE'S TRYING TO KILL US! BOTH OF US!
I'LL GET TO THE WHEEL-HOUSE... START THE ENGINES...
YOUR GRANDFATHER'S MAD, JASON!
OR MAYBE HE'S SANE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE... AND HE CAN'T BEAR IT...

AXA AND JASON ARE MAKING THEIR ESCAPE FROM THE ARKADY ISLAND...
HEAD FOR THE OPEN SEA, BOATMAN, AND OPEN THE THROTTLES! THE JETTY'S AWASH WITH SPILT PETROL...
...AND ONE RICOCHET FROM A BULLET... ONE SPARK...COULD IGNITE IT...

AAH!
YOU WERE RIGHT, JASON! A SPARK'S IGNITED THE PETROL ON THE JETTY!
AND THERE'S MORE FUEL TANKED IN THE BOAT-HOUSE...
YOUR GRANDFATHER... HE'LL NEVER GET AWAY IN TIME...
DON'T LOOK, AXA...

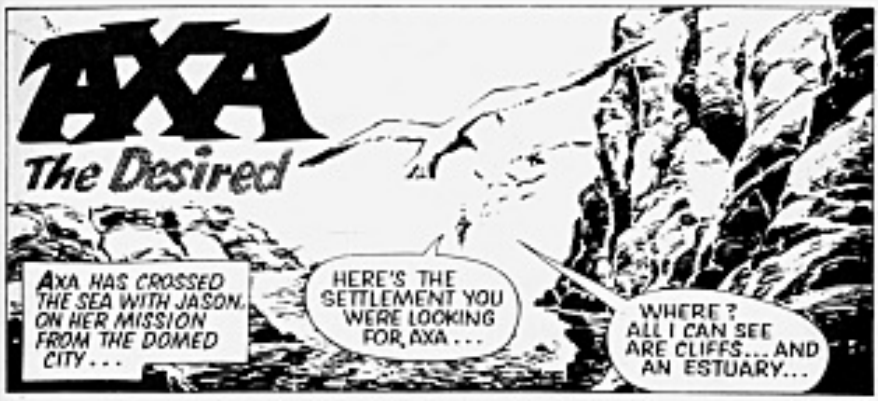
AN EXPLOSION RIPS APART THE OLD BOATHOUSE ON ARKADY ISLAND...
WHROUM!
AAGH!

HECTOR ARKADY HAS DIED ON THE BLAZING JETTY...
POOR CRAZY OLD MAN...
HE TRIED TO KILL US, AXA...
AND MAYBE IT'S BETTER THIS WAY. WHAT DID HE HAVE TO LIVE FOR? THE ISLAND PARADISE IS DOOMED, ANYWAY
LOOK, JASON! FLAMES STREAKING UP THE CLIFF FROM THE JETTY!

FUEL IS PIPED FROM THE JETTY TO THE MANSION ON THE CLIFFS! THE FLAMES ARE BACKING UP THE FUEL-PIPES!
THE ARKADY PARADISE IS DOOMED, ALL RIGHT... AND SOONER THAN WE EXPECTED!

FIRE DESTROYS THE MANSION OF THE MILLION-AIRE ARKADYS...
A HUNDRED YEARS OF GRACIOUS, SELFISH, FUTILE LIVING... A TINY FRAGMENT OF CIVILISATION... GONE UP IN SMOKE...
IT WAS YOUR HOME, JASON. I KNOW HOW YOU MUST FEEL
WE LOVE EACH OTHER, YES. MAYBE YOU DO

BUT I WAS LIVING IN THE PAST, AXA. UNTIL YOU CAME ALONG. AND THE PAST IS THAT FUNERAL PYRE BEHIND US
THERE'S THE FUTURE... OURS, AND THE WORLD'S ... OVER THE HORIZON...


AXA
The Desired
AXA HAS CROSSED THE SEA WITH JASON, ON HER MISSION FROM THE DOMED CITY...
HERE'S THE SETTLEMENT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR, AXA...
WHERE? ALL I CAN SEE ARE CLIFFS... AND AN ESTUARY...

MAYBE YOU CAN'T SEE THE SETTLEMENT... BUT WE'RE RIGHT ON TOP OF IT...

TALK SENSE, MAN!
IF YOU WANT TO FIND THE SETTLEMENT... WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A SWIM?

PERHAPS HE IS, JASON... I'M GOING TO DO AS HE SAYS, ANYWAY...

BUT WHERE DO YOU IMAGINE THE SETTLEMENT IS... IN THE SEA?
THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO FIND OUT...

IF YOU DON'T COME STRAIGHT BACK, AXA, I'LL TAKE THE BOAT TO A SAFE ANCHORAGE ALONG THE COAST AND WAIT FOR YOU THERE!

WHAT'S GOING TO KEEP ME ... DOWN HERE?

SUNLIGHT? REFLECTED? FROM BELOW?

UUH! GLASS?

A DOME! UNDER THE SEA!
HAVE I FOUND THE SETTLEMENT?

MUST GET A LUNGFUL OF AIR...
I DIDN'T DREAM THAT, JASON. DID I? YOU SAW IT TOO? A DOME UNDER THE SEA?
I'M GOING DOWN AGAIN...
WAIT, AXA! DANGER!
I CAN'T WAIT!
WITH A MARVEL LIKE THE UNDER-WATER DOME DOWN THERE... WHO CARES ABOUT DANGER?
HUH?
NOT SHARKS... MEN...
OR RATHER... BOYS...
AND HANDSOME ONES...
AXA MEETS STRANGERS ON THE FOREIGN COAST...
LITHE BODIES... SMILING FACES... BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE...
BUT...
HANDS AND FEET... WEBBED!

AM I IMAGINING IT? BOYS WITH WEBBED HANDS AND FEET?

AND FINS ON THEIR BACKS?

WHAT'S WRONG, AXA?
A NIGHT-MARE!

BUT THEY'RE REAL! I SAW THEM DOWN THERE, UNDER-WATER!
SAW WHAT? MAKE SENSE, AXA!

OH NO! THEY'RE DRAGGING ME DOWN!

URG!

WHAT DO THEY WANT WITH ME? THESE BEAUTIFUL... SMILING... MONSTERS!

THEY'VE GOT JASON, TOO... THEY'RE HUSTLING US ALONG, UNDER-WATER...

AIR! DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND? OR I'LL DROWN!

CAN THEY BREATHE UNDERWATER? DO THEY HAVE GILLS... AS WELL AS WEBBED HANDS AND FEET!

WHO ARE THEY? THESE HANDSOME... GROTESQUE ...FISH-BOYS...

MORE OF THEM... SURF-RIDING IN THE ESTUARY...

AXA IN THE WEBBED HANDS OF THE GROTESQUE FISH-BOYS...
OH NO... THEY'RE DRAGGING ME UNDERWATER AGAIN...
BUT ONE OF THEM IS WORRIED! WHAT'S HE SEEN?
MEN WEARING UNDERWATER GEAR ...REAL MEN...

THEY'RE ATTACKING THE FISH-BOYS...
...WITH SPEAR-GUNS!
AAARG
GAH!

WHO ARE THESE MEN? ENEMIES OF THE FISH-BOYS, THAT'S FOR SURE!
BUT ARE THEY HOSTILE TO US?
NO... THIS ONE SEEMS FRIENDLY...

AT LEAST HE UNDERSTANDS THAT I NEED AIR TO BREATHE...
AAH!
DON'T WORRY! WE'RE HUMAN, LIKE YOU... AND UNLIKE THESE SURFERS...
SURFERS?
THAT'S WHAT WE CALL THEM! MUTANTS... HALF MEN, HALF-FISH...

BUT EXPLANATIONS LATER... LET'S GET YOU ASHORE...
YOU LIVE HERE?
IN THE CAVES AT THE BASE OF THE CLIFF...
THEN YOU'RE NOT FROM THE SETTLEMENT... IF IT IS ONE... IN THE DOME I SAW UNDER THE SEA!

YES, WE BELONG TO THE SEA DOME... BUT WE'RE MEN... NOT PRIVILEGED TO LIVE IN IT...
A WOMAN?
BUT NOT ONE OF THEM?
KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF ME!
MERCY!
DON'T PUNISH US!
HUH?

THEY'RE CRINGING! WHY ARE THEY SO HUMBLE?
YOU'RE A WOMAN, AREN'T YOU? AND THEY'RE MEN!
THEY LIVE LIKE PRIMITIVES IN THIS CAVE ...YET THEY BELONG TO THE SEA DOME! I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT!
NOR DO I! AND AS A MAN... I DON'T LIKE IT, EITHER!

AXA MEETS THE DWELLERS IN THE SEA CAVE...
WHAT IS THIS THING ABOUT WOMEN AND MEN?
RULES OF THE SEA DOME...
HOLD YOUR TONGUE, KEV! NOT FOR US TO EXPLAIN!
COME, STRANGERS! I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE DOME!

SO DON'T WE HAVE TO SWIM OUT TO IT?
FOR A WOMAN... BEGGING YOUR PARDON... YOU'RE IGNORANT!
THEY'RE WELL-ORGANISED, AXA, I'LL SAY THAT FOR THEM!
SO?
BUT I SAW THE DOME! IT'S OFFSHORE... UNDER THE SEA...
WE WALK TO THE SEA DOME... ALONG THE TUBE...

SAY WHAT YOU HAVE TO NOW, MAN! IN THE DOME, YOU SPEAK ONLY WHEN YOU'RE SPOKEN TO!
WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE ARE THEY, THEN, WHO LIVE IN THE DOME?
NOT JUST PEOPLE! THE RULERS!
AND WHO ARE THE RULERS?
YOU OUGHT TO KNOW... YOU'RE A WOMAN, AREN'T YOU?

I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND THESE PEOPLE, JASON...
THEIR CUSTOMS MAY BE ODD... BUT THEY'RE SOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGICALLY...
THIS TUBE, FOR INSTANCE... FLEXIBLE AND PRESSURISED... LAID ACROSS THE SEABED...
ANOTHER AIRLOCK-DOOR AHEAD...
AND TWO MORE MEN GUARDING IT...

FORGET THE GUARDS, AXA! JUST LOOK AT THAT TECHNOLOGICAL MARVEL!
OH... YES...
A DOMED CITY... UNDER THE SEA!

MEN HAVE DESIGNED AND BUILT SOME WONDERFUL THINGS... OUT OF THE RUINS OF THE GREAT CONTAMINATION...
BUT THIS... A CIVILISATION UNDER THE SEA... FANTASTIC!

AXA IN THE SEA DOME...
MEN BUILT THE SEA DOME, YES! BUT DESIGNED IT? YOU MUST BE JOKING!
WE KNOW OUR PLACE. HERE IN THE FIELDS... DOWN IN THE PRESSURIZER PLANT... WHEREVER THERE'S BRUTE WORK TO BE DONE...
WE LEAVE THE BRAIN-WORK TO THE RULERS...

WHO ARE THESE RULERS YOU KEEP TALKING ABOUT?
I'M TAKING YOU TO THEM, NOW...
WOMEN?
THEY WHO MAKE DECISIONS...
THE STRANGERS WE RESCUED FROM THE MUTANTS, CONTROLLER!
WELCOME TO THE SEA DOME, GIRL

WOMEN RULE... IN THE SEA DOME?
OF COURSE. WHY DOES IT SURPRISE YOU?
BECAUSE SHE KNOWS THAT MEN ARE THE NATURAL LEADERS!
INSOLENCE!
DEAL WITH HIM, PUGH!
GUH!

JASON! WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?
PUNISHED HIM! WHAT DID HE EXPECT? CHALLENGING OUR AUTHORITY?
COME AWAY FROM HIM! DEMEANING YOURSELF TO TOUCH A MAN!
BUT I LOVE HIM...
389

YOU DON'T LOVE BRUTES, GIRL! NOT IN THE SEA DOME! TAKE HIM BACK TO THE CAVES. PUGH!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CRUEL? ARE YOU WOMEN, OR AREN'T YOU?
390
WE'RE RULERS... WOMEN, TOO. BUT SYMPATHY FOR ONE'S INFERIORS IS WEAKNESS

391
WHO SAID THAT MEN WERE OUR INFERIORS?
OUR FOUNDER, A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, BEFORE THE GREAT CONTAMINATION
SHE WAS WHAT THE OLD PEOPLE CALLED A RICH HEIRESS, AND A FEMINIST. SHE HELD THAT WOMEN WERE DISTINGUISHED BY INTELLIGENCE, MEN BY STRENGTH
SO WHEN SHE FINANCED THE SEA DOME PROJECT, SHE STIPULATED THAT THE SCIENTISTS WHO DESIGNED IT SHOULD ALL BE WOMEN!

AXA CONFRONTS THE FEMALE RULERS OF THE SEA DOME...
AND SO THE SEABED FARMING PROJECT, AND THE DOME THAT HOUSED IT, WERE DESIGNED BY WOMEN
THE LABOUR FORCE THAT BUILT THE SEA DOME WAS, NATURALLY, ALL-MALE. ONLY BRUTE STRENGTH WAS REQUIRED FOR THAT
MEN, YOU MIGHT SAY, PROVIDED THE BRAWN... WOMEN THE BRAINS...
392

THE PROJECT WAS BARELY COMPLETED WHEN THE GREAT CONTAMINATION CAME...
THE WOMEN WHO DESIGNED IT, AND THE MEN WHO BUILT IT, TOOK REFUGE FROM THE FIRE-STORMS IN THEIR GREAT DOME BENEATH THE SEA...
FROM THE START, THE WOMEN OF THE DOME WERE ALL INTELLECTUALS AND LEADERS... THE MEN BRUTES AND SLAVES...
393

CONTROLLED BREEDING, OVER THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS, HAS ENSURED THE SUPERIORITY OF WOMEN OVER MEN IN THE SEA DOME SOCIETY
SO YOU'RE PARAGONS AND THEY'RE BRUTES! IS THAT ANY REASON TO VICTIMISE THEM?
MEN VICTIMISED WOMEN FOR CENTURIES, BEFORE THE GREAT CONTAMINATION!
TWO WRONGS DON'T MAKE A RIGHT!
394

WHILE YOU'RE HERE IN THE SEA DOME, YOU'LL OBEY OUR RULES. WHY, MAY I ASK, ARE YOU HERE?
I'VE BROUGHT YOU A LETTER. ... FROM THE CONTROLLER OF THE DOMED CITY... ACROSS THE SEA...
395
I SHALL CONSIDER THIS. INGRID WILL TAKE YOU TO THE WOMEN'S QUARTERS AND SEE TO YOUR COMFORT

YOU CAN'T CHANGE ANYTHING THAT'S REALLY ME! I'M NOT STAYING HERE, ANYWAY, IN THIS PLEASURE DOME OF YOURS UNDER THE SEA!
YOU'LL NEED PROPER CLOTHES, INSTEAD OF THOSE RAGS. I SUPPOSE WE CAN'T CHANGE YOUR NAME-?
YOU'LL STAY HERE UNTIL LEONORE HAS CONSIDERED THE LETTER YOU BROUGHT ... BY THEN YOU MAY HAVE CHANGED YOUR MIND...
396

AXA IN THE SEA-DOME...
WORK IN PROGRESS... THIS IS MORE MY SCENE...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THAT BULLDOZER?
WE RECLAIMED A NEW SECTION OF THE SEABED YESTERDAY. IT HAS TO BE LEVELLED AND CLEARED
CAREFUL! THAT'S RAW NATURE IN THERE! NO PLACE FOR A WOMAN OF THE SEA DOME!

BUT I'M A WOMAN OF THE WORLD... THE REAL WORLD, OUTSIDE THE SEA DOME...
AND THIS IS A TINY CORNER OF IT... RECLAIMED SEABED... NOT YET TIDIED UP AND PRETTIFIED...
RAW NATURE... I'D BETTER ENJOY IT WHILE I CAN...

KLAKK!
OHH!
HIDING IN THE ROCKS BEHIND ME... A GIANT CRAB!
KRAKK!
RAW NATURE, ALL RIGHT! TOO RAW!

HELP!
THE WOMAN WE RESCUED FROM THE SEA! IN DANGER!
SOMEONE HEARD MY SHOUT!
RUN, AXA! I'LL HANDLE THE BRUTE!
KEV!

AAH!
NO! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE FOR ME!
STAND CLEAR, BOTH OF YOU! THIS IS A JOB FOR A MACHINE!
UUH!

KRANNNG!
BULLDOZER VERSUS GIANT CRAB... NOW I'VE SEEN EVERYTHING...
THE BRUTE'S CRIPPLED... NO MATCH FOR THE MACHINE...

THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE GIANT CRAB AND THE BULLDOZER IS OVER...
KRUNNCH!
RUN, KEV! TAKE THE WOMAN WITH YOU! I'LL FINISH OFF THIS BRUTE!
BUT YOU'RE WOUNDED!
WHY SHOULD YOU CARE? MEN ARE EXPENDABLE IN THE DOME!
BUT I'M NOT A WOMAN OF THE DOME! YOU SAVED MY LIFE— AND I CARE!

SOME WOMEN OF THE DOME CARE, TOO...
KEV!
I'M ALL RIGHT, SUE! JUST A SCRATCH!
OH, KEV!
SO DESPITE THEIR RULES... THEIR SEX APARTHEID... THE SEA DOME HAS ITS LOVERS, TOO...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE ?
OH NO... THAT ELITIST BITCH INGRID...
EMBRACING A MAN? SHOWING AFFECTION FOR THE BRUTE ? AND IN PUBLIC ?
TAKE HIM BACK TO THE CAVES !
WAIT, INGRID ! HE SAVED MY LIFE ! AND HE'S WOUNDED !

HE'LL LIVE, WOMAN ! TOO BAD IF HE DOESN'T ! WE CAN DO WITHOUT TROUBLEMAKERS IN THE SEA DOME !
LOVING SOMEONE... SHOWING AFFECTION ... IS MAKING TROUBLE ?
IN THE DOME, YES ! WE HAVE OUR RULES ! EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE FORBIDDEN BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN !

THIS WRETCHED GIRL HAS FLOUTED THE RULES ! THE CONTROLLER WILL DEAL WITH HER !
YOU'RE GUILTY OF A GRAVE CRIME, SUE. YOU DON'T DENY IT ? AND YOU KNOW THE PUNISHMENT ?
FOR PITY'S SAKE ! SHE LOVES A MAN ! THAT'S A CRIME, IN THE SEA DOME ?

DON'T BE A FOOL, AXA ! WOMEN RULE IN THE SEA DOME ! HOW LONG WOULD THE MEN BE OUR SLAVES, IF WE ALLOWED OURSELVES TO LOVE THEM ?
SUE DOESN'T WANT TO RULE KEV ! SHE WANTS A PARTNER, NOT A SLAVE !
SO SHE MUST BE PUNISHED... BY THE LOSS OF ALL PRIVILEGES FOR A MONTH...
DON'T MIS-UNDERSTAND US, AXA... IT'S ONLY ROMANTIC LOVE WE FROWN ON, BETWEEN THE SEXES...

I MEAN, WE WOMEN HAVE OUR RELAXATION... OUR PLEASURES...
PERHAPS THAT'S WHAT AXA NEEDS, INGRID ?
OF COURSE! I WAS FORGETTING HOW LONG YOU'VE BEEN CONFINED DOWN HERE IN THE SEA DOME!
BUT DON'T WORRY... WE'LL SOON TAKE CARE OF YOUR TENSION...

THAT'S THE ONE! SEND HIM DOWN TO ME! HE SOUNDS DELICIOUSLY HOSTILE!
WHAT WAS ALL THAT ABOUT, INGRID? WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
MY, BUT WE'RE TENSE!
WE CALL THIS THE PLAY CENTRE ... BUT YOU WON'T BENEFIT FROM THE THERAPY IF YOU DON'T RELAX...

THIS IS YOUR CUBICLE...
WHO'S THE MAN? WHY IS HE HERE?
HAVE FUN, AXA!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?
MY DUTY, OF COURSE
OH, NO... I DON'T BELIEVE IT...

THIS IS WHAT INGRID MEANT BY THERAPY!
REGULATED, CLINICAL, COLD-BLOODED SEX!
WITH A MALE STUD!

AXA IN THE PLAY CENTRE OF THE SEA DOME...
I WAS ONLY DOING MY JOB...
THAT'S WHAT DISGUSTS ME!
SEX ON A ROTA SYSTEM! FOR YOU MEN, A CHORE... FOR THE WOMEN WHO RULE YOU, A REMEDIAL EXERCISE!
WHAT HAPPENED TO LOVE, IN THIS FRIGID LITTLE WORLD UNDER THE SEA?

WOMEN LIKE INGRID DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS! THEY'RE AS COLD-BLOODED AS THE FISH OUTSIDE THIS DOME!
SHE CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT JASON AND I FEEL FOR EACH OTHER... LOYALTY, TENDERNESS, PASSION...
GO ON! I LIKE IT WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY!
INGRID...

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME, YOU SLUT!
TO BE INSULTED LIKE THAT BY A MAN! DELICIOUS!
CAN'T YOU GET IT INTO YOUR CORRUPT LITTLE HEAD? I DON'T WANT TO MAKE LOVE TO YOU!
I KNOW...
THAT'S WHAT MAKES YOU SO FASCINATING!

THE MAN WITH INGRID... IT CAN'T BE...
... BUT IT IS...
JASON!

AXA...
MY, BUT YOU HAVE BEEN QUICK! DIDN'T YOU ENJOY YOURSELF?
PERHAPS YOU FOUND THE DUMB OBEDIENCE OF OUR SEA DOME MALES AS BORING AS I DO?
THIS MAN OF YOURS, NOW, IS DELICIOUSLY DIFFERENT!
DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA, AXA...

I WAS BROUGHT HERE BY FORCE, AXA, TO PLEASURE THIS SLUT!
I KNOW...
I'VE BEEN A PRISONER EVER SINCE WE ARRIVED HERE!
I KNOW THAT, TOO...
THE WOMEN TREAT MEN LIKE SLAVES IN THIS DAMNED SEA DOME OF THEIRS!
THEN YOU'RE NOT JEALOUS?
OF COURSE NOT, JASON. I LOVE YOU

I HATE THE SEA DOME AS MUCH AS YOU DO ... AND THE ARROGANT WOMEN WHO RULE IT...
SO WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?
YOU'LL DO NOTHING!
GUARDS!

TAKE THE MAN!
NO! HE'S NOT ONE OF YOUR DUMB BRUTES OF THE SEA DOME! HE'S MINE!
MEN ARE COMMUNAL PROPERTY HERE, LADY! YOU'LL GET USED TO IT!
9/11

JASON IN THE HANDS OF THE FEMALE RULERS OF THE SEA-DOME . . .
I WON'T!
DON'T LET THEM TAKE ME BACK TO THAT FILTHY CAVE, AXA!
WHAT KIND OF A WOMAN ARE YOU?
SHE'S FROM THE OUTSIDE! NO BETTER THAN A MAN!
9/12
CONTROL YOURSELF, AXA! YOU'RE A DISGRACE TO YOUR SEX!

I DON'T BELONG HERE IN THE SEA DOME, ANY MORE THAN JASON DOES! STOP THEM, INGRID!
I CERTAINLY WON'T!
WHILE THE TWO OF YOU ARE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY, YOU'LL OBEY OUR RULES!
9/11
RULES THAT REFLECT OUR SUPERIORITY OVER MEN. DON'T YOU HAVE ANY PRIDE IN BEING A WOMAN, AXA?

YOU EXPECT ME TO BE PROUD? OF BEING A WOMAN, HERE IN THE SEA DOME?
WHERE MEN ARE TREATED LIKE SLAVES? AND WOMEN ARE COLD-HEARTED BITCHES WHO ABUSE THEIR POWER?
SHE'LL LEARN, CONTROLLER
IF SHE STAYS HERE, SHE'LL HAVE TO!
9/24

I WON'T LEARN! AND I WON'T STAY HERE IN THIS FEMALE POLICE-STATE OF A SEA-DOME!
I DON'T WANT TO BE SUPERIOR TO MEN! I DON'T WANT POWER OVER THEM!
I WANT TO BE A HUMAN BEING FIRST... AND A WOMAN AFTER-WARDS!
Romero

I'VE GOT TO ESCAPE ... AND RESCUE JASON FROM THE CAVES UNDER THE CLIFF...
BUT THERE'LL BE GUARDS ON THE SEA-BED ACCESS-TUBE THAT LINKS THE DOME WITH THE CAVES...
I CAN'T ESCAPE THAT WAY...

SECURE THE PRESSURISED HATCH, CHUCK...
I KNOW THE REGULATIONS FOR DOME-WALL MAINTENANCE WORKERS...
WE DON'T WANT THE SEA TO FLOOD IN AND DROWN OUR PRECIOUS RULERS...
KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN! WOMEN HAVE SHARP EARS!
A WAY OF ESCAPE! OUT THROUGH THE WALL OF THE DOME!

AXA ESCAPING FROM THE SEA-DOME...
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS FLOOD THE PRESSURISED HATCH...
AND IF THERE'S NO ANTI-PERSONNEL DEVICE TO TRAP AND DROWN ME...
... EJECT INTO THE SEA!
Romero

THE SEA DOME IS ONLY HALF A MILE OFFSHORE... ONCE I'VE SURFACED, I CAN SWIM TO THE CAVE WHERE THEY'RE HOLDING JASON PRISONER...
BUT THE UNDER-WATER CURRENTS ARE STRONGER THAN I EXPECTED...
OH NO! THE ONE DANGER I DIDN'T FORESEE! A STORM RAGING ON THE SURFACE!

RIP TIDE... SWEEPING ME AWAY...
INTO THE ESTUARY... AND THE CLUTCHES OF THOSE WEIRD FISH-BOYS, THE SURFERS...
DO I CALL FOR HELP? OR DROWN?

HEAR THAT, DEZ?
HELP!
SEE IT, TOO!
GIRL!
NOT ONE OF US, EITHER! LAND-GIRL!
SHE'S GOT FINGERS, HUH? TOES, MAYBE?

AXA RESCUED BY THE SURFERS...
DON'T FIGHT THE SEA, GIRL ... USE IT!
EASY FOR YOU TO TALK... LIVING IN IT THE WAY YOU DO...
DO YOU MIND? WE LIVE IN HOUSES!
THOSE TUMBLEDOWN SHACKS ON POLES... STANDING IN THE WATER?
WE FOUND US A GIRL, NIK! LAND-GIRL FROM THE DOME!
SHE'S GOT FINGERS AND TOES! SHARP TONGUE, TOO!

WE SCARE YOU, HUH? SICKEN YOU, MAYBE?
WELL... NO...
YOU'LL GET USED TO US. DON'T LET THE WEBBED HANDS THROW YOU. WE'RE HUMAN BEINGS, TOO
LIKE, WE CAN BE FRIENDLY... IF WE WANT TO BE. AND WITH YOU, I WANT TO BE

BLOW, ROZ! WE'VE GOT A VISITOR!
IS THAT WHAT I AM? OR A PRISONER?
RELAX! YOU'LL GET TO LIKE IT HERE! YOU CAN EVEN HAVE YOUR OWN ROOM... WITH A BOLT ON THE DOOR!
COME TO THAT, WHY DID YOU BREAK OUT OF THE SEA DOME? TOO TAME FOR YOU IN THERE?

WANTED A REAL MAN, DID YOU? INSTEAD OF THOSE MALE ZOMBIES IN THE DOME?
NO...
OKAY! FOR A BODY LIKE YOURS, I CAN WAIT! AND YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE!
WHAT ABOUT ME, NIK? I'M YOUR GIRL, AREN'T I?
SURE YOU ARE! FISH-GIRL! MAYBE I'M TURNED OFF BY WEBBED HANDS AND FEET!

WE NEED FOOD FOR OUR VISITOR, GANG! LAND-GIRL FOOD!
LONG SWIM TO THE OYSTER-BEDS...
AND NIK'S NOT THROWING ME OVER FOR A PAIR OF HANDS WITH FINGERS...
YOU WANT TO ESCAPE, LAND-GIRL?

OF COURSE I WANT TO ESCAPE! BUT WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS FOR ME?
IS IT GENEROSITY... OR JEALOUSY?
BIG WORDS! JUST GET GOING BEFORE NIK COMES BACK!
4-17
THE TIDE'S OUT... WE CAN WALK ACROSS THE SAND, TO THE CAVES IN THE CLIFF AND YOUR OWN PEOPLE...

ROZ HELPS AXA TO ESCAPE FROM THE SURFERS...
HOW DID YOU... GET LIKE THIS?
THE WEBBED HANDS AND FEET?
IT WAS AFTER THAT GREAT CONDAMN THING, WAY BACK. OUR PEOPLE WERE HOOKED ON THE SEA BEFORE IT... BEACH BOYS, THEY WERE CALLED...
WHEN THE LAND WENT BAD, THEY TOOK TO THE SEA FOR KEEPS... AND THESE JUST HAPPENED...
4-18
NATURAL MUTATION...

I COULD USE WEBBED FEET MYSELF... ON THIS SOFT SAND...
OH NO... I'M REALLY SINKING...
STOP, ROZ!
4-19
OKAY! I'VE TAKEN YOU FAR ENOUGH NOW, I RECKON!

HELP, ROZ! GET ME OUT OF HERE!
WHY SHOULD I?
NIK FANCIES YOU! GOT A THING ABOUT FINGERS AND TOES! BUT HE'S MY FISH-BOY AND NO ONE TAKES HIM AWAY FROM ME!
4-20
YOU LURED ME HERE DELIBERATELY! INTO A QUICKSAND!

PLEASE, ROZ! HELP ME...
NO...
YOUR FAULT IF YOU'RE NOT MADE LIKE A SURFER ... WITH WEBBED FEET FOR SEA AND SAND... INSTEAD OF TOES AND FINGERS TO HOOK MEN WITH...
SHE'S LEAVING ME HERE... TO DIE...

AXA SINKS INTO THE QUICKSAND...
OH NO... DON'T LET ME DIE THIS WAY...
HELP! HELP!
DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR, PUGH?
RIGHT! SOMEONE TRAPPED IN THE QUICK-SAND!
NOT A SURFER! ONE OF THE DOME WOMEN!

IT'S AXA!
CRAWL, YOU FOOL! OR YOU'LL SINK INTO THE QUICKSAND WITH HER!
GRAB MY SPEAR-GUN, WOMAN!
OH... YES...
YOU SAVED MY LIFE, IN THE SEA DOME... NOW I CAN HELP TO SAVE YOURS...

AXA'S LIFE HAS BEEN SAVED BY TWO OF THE SEA DOME MEN...
WE'LL TAKE YOU TO THE CAVES, WOMAN...
HOW DID YOU GET INTO THAT QUICKSAND?
I BROKE OUT OF THE DOME... THE SURFERS PICKED ME UP... ONE OF THEIR GIRLS TRIED TO KILL ME...
AXA!
WE'LL WORRY ABOUT THOSE WEB-FOOTED DEVILS LATER... RIGHT NOW WE'VE GOT TROUBLES OF OUR OWN...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, AXA?
A LONG STORY... WITH A HAPPY ENDING...
OH, JASON!
YOU ESCAPED FROM THE SEA DOME! YOU HATE THE DAMNED PLACE AS MUCH AS I DO!
A WOMAN OF THE DOME!
KILL HER!
HUH?
BACK, YOU FOOLS! SHE MAY BE A WOMAN, BUT SHE'S ON OUR SIDE!
THEY WANTED TO KILL ME?
THERE'S A REBELLION BREWING, AXA... BY THESE POOR DOWNTRODDEN DEVILS AGAINST THE WOMEN RULERS OF THE SEA DOME...
YOU STIRRED THEM UP, JASON...
WHAT OF IT? DO YOU BLAME ME?
I'VE SEEN HOW THOSE WOMEN TREAT MEN IN THE SEA DOME! LIKE SLAVES, LIKE ANIMALS!
SO YOU WANT MEN TO RULE, INSTEAD? WOULD THAT BE ANY BETTER?
BETTER FOR US!
WE'VE DONE ENOUGH TALKING! WE'LL NEVER GET A BETTER CHANCE TO ATTACK THE SEA DOME!
AND HERE'S THE WOMAN WHO'S GIVEN US THAT CHANCE!
ME?
YOU ESCAPED FROM THE DOME, DIDN'T YOU...
SO WE'VE RECAPTURED YOU, AND IT'S OUR DUTY TO TAKE YOU BACK!

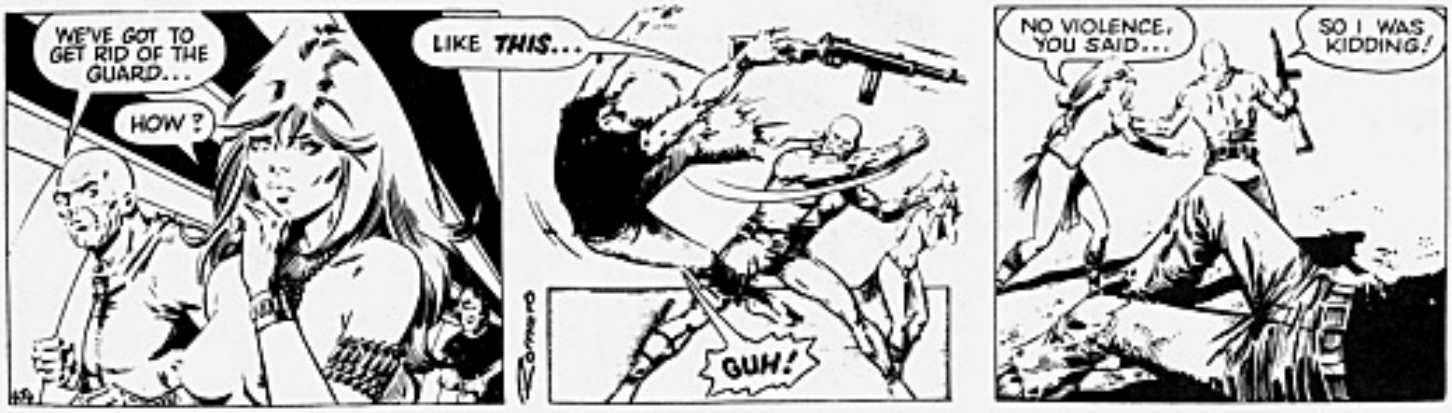
IT'S A TRICK, YOU FOOL! I'LL INSIST ON TAKING THE RECAPTURED GIRL TO THE SEA DOME'S CONTROL ROOM...
NOW WAIT A MINUTE, PUGH...
AND WHAT IF I DON'T AGREE?
ONCE THERE, I'LL OVER-POWER THE WOMEN IN CHARGE... AND AXA CAN RADIO ORDERS TO THE MALE GUARDS ON THE ACCESS-TUBE TO LAY DOWN THEIR GUNS...

AXA INVOLVED IN A REBELLION AT THE SEA DOME...
ARE YOU FOR US OR AGAINST US, AXA?
LET'S JUST SAY I'M AGAINST INJUSTICE...
WOMEN DOMINATING MEN, OR MEN DOMINATING WOMEN, IT'S ALL THE SAME TO ME... STUPID AND VILE!
WE'LL ARGUE ABOUT IT WHEN WE'VE CAPTURED THE DOME!

NOT ALL THE MEN ARE BEHIND YOU, PUGH! SOME OF US DON'T BELIEVE IN VIOLENCE!
STAY HERE AND PRAY, THEN — WE DON'T NEED YOU!
VIOLENCE?
THERE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ANY, AXA, IF YOU PLAY YOUR PART...

JASON AND THE MEN WILL BE IN THE ACCESS-TUBE WAITING FOR THE GUARDS TO LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS...
YOU'LL GIVE THE GUARDS THEIR ORDERS FROM THE CONTROL ROOM... THEY'LL OBEY A WOMAN'S VOICE...
WE HAVE TO GET INTO THE CONTROL ROOM FIRST...
SO START ACTING...

WE RE-CAPTURED THE WOMAN WHO BROKE OUT OF THE DOME!
GOOD! THERE'S A PRIORITY-ONE ALERT FOR HER!
I'D BETTER TAKE HER STRAIGHT TO THE CONTROL ROOM...
RIGHT!
I'LL ESCORT YOU THERE!
HELL!


WE'VE GOT TO GET RID OF THE GUARD...
HOW?
LIKE THIS...
GUH!
NO VIOLENCE, YOU SAID...
SO I WAS KIDDING!

NOW GET IN THERE... AND STRING THOSE WOMEN ALONG...
WE RECAPTURED THE WOMAN AXA FOR YOU, CONTROLLER! I'VE BROUGHT HER BACK!
SO I SEE. WE'RE INDEBTED TO YOU, PUGH
LOOK OUT! IT'S A TRICK! HE'S GOT A GUN!

WARN YOUR SISTERS, WOULD YOU? BITCH!
THE MAN'S ARMED, LEONORE! SUMMON THE GUARDS!
NO YOU DON'T...
YOU'VE QUEENED IT LONG ENOUGH IN THE SEA DOME! NOW IT'S OUR TURN!

A MALE REBELLION!
THERE'S FIFTY MEN IN THE ACCESS TUBE, WAITING FOR ME TO BUST THEM INTO THE DOME!
WARN THE GUARDS AT THE TUBE, LEONORE!
WHAT WITH? PUGH WRECKED THE INTERCOM!

YOU HELPED THOSE MALE BRUTES, AXA! YOU BETRAYED YOUR OWN SEX!
PUGH SWORE THERE'D BE NO VIOLENCE!
BUT THE MONITOR SCREEN DOESN'T LIE...
AGH!
JASON! I'VE HANDLED THE GUARDS! BRING THE MEN IN!

DID YOU HAVE TO KILL THE POOR DEVILS?
IT WAS THAT BITCH OF YOURS WHO SCREWED UP THE ORIGINAL PLAN!
AXA?
SHE WARNED THE RULERS WHAT WAS HAPPENING ...BEFORE I SHUT HER MOUTH...
YOU'VE KILLED AXA, TOO?
GO AND FIND OUT! THE REST OF US HAVE GOT WORK TO DO!

AXA! I WAS AFRAID YOU WERE DEAD!
OH, JASON!
BUT THAT BRUTE PUGH HAS HURT YOU!
IT'S ONLY A SCRATCH...
YOUR CONCERN FOR EACH OTHER IS TOUCHING. DOES IT EXTEND TO THE REST OF US, WHOM YOU'VE BETRAYED?

PUGH AND HIS MEN... RAMPAGING INTO THE SEA DOME...

KILL!
KILL!
VIOLENCE... MURDER... AND I HELPED TO UNLEASH IT...
SO DID I, JASON! BUT HOW COULD WE KNOW WE WERE REPLACING ONE TYRANNY WITH ANOTHER?

ARMED REBELLION AGAINST THE FEMALE RULERS OF THE SEA DOME...
MAYBE WE CAN STOP PUGH AND HIS MEN, AXA?
NO... YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH HERE ALREADY...

I'LL TAKE THE GUN!

IF THOSE MALE BRUTES WANT VIOLENCE, THEY CAN HAVE IT!
WAIT, INGRID...

I'M GOING TO KILL PUGH! THE REVOLT WILL COLLAPSE WITHOUT A LEADER!
INGRID, STOP!

I CAN DISPOSE OF THE REBELS MORE EFFICIENTLY! COME BACK, INGRID!

SHE'S AS CRAZY WITH HATRED AS PUGH! WE'VE GOT TO STOP HER, JASON!

WHAT DID LEONORE MEAN, AXA? ABOUT DISPOSING OF THE REBELS MORE EFFICIENTLY?
DOES IT MATTER?

IT'S INGRID WE'VE GOT TO STOP!
HUH?

THE FOOLS... I TRIED TO WARN THEM...
...BUT AS CONTROLLER OF THE SEA DOME, I HAVE MY DUTY TO PERFORM...

LET GO OF ME, AXA!
NO! THERE'S BEEN ENOUGH KILLING!
THE GIRL'S RIGHT... BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER TO DISORDER AND ANARCHY...
NOT JUST KILLING. EXTERMINATION!

THE WALL OF THE DOME'S COLLAPSING!
THIS SECTION, ANYWAY!
THE SEA'S POURING IN!
WHAT HAPPENED, INGRID?
LEONORE PRESSED THE DESTRUCT BUTTON!

SHE MEANS THAT HER CHARMING CONTROLLER HAS DECIDED TO DROWN THE LOT OF US!
IT'S A FAIL-SAFE DEVICE! A WHOLE SECTION OF THE SEA DOME CAN BE FLOODED TO WIPE OUT INTRUDERS!
THE DOOR'S SLIDING SHUT BEHIND US...
THERE'S STILL TIME FOR US TO ESCAPE, AXA!
BUT NOT FOR YOU, SWEETHEART...

THE SEA DOME IS FLOODED TO CRUSH REBELLION...
QUICK, AXA! THREE MORE SECONDS AND WE'LL BE TRAPPED!
BUT PUGH'S GOT INGRID!
AAGH!
IT'S ONLY YOU I CARE ABOUT! I WON'T LET YOU DROWN!

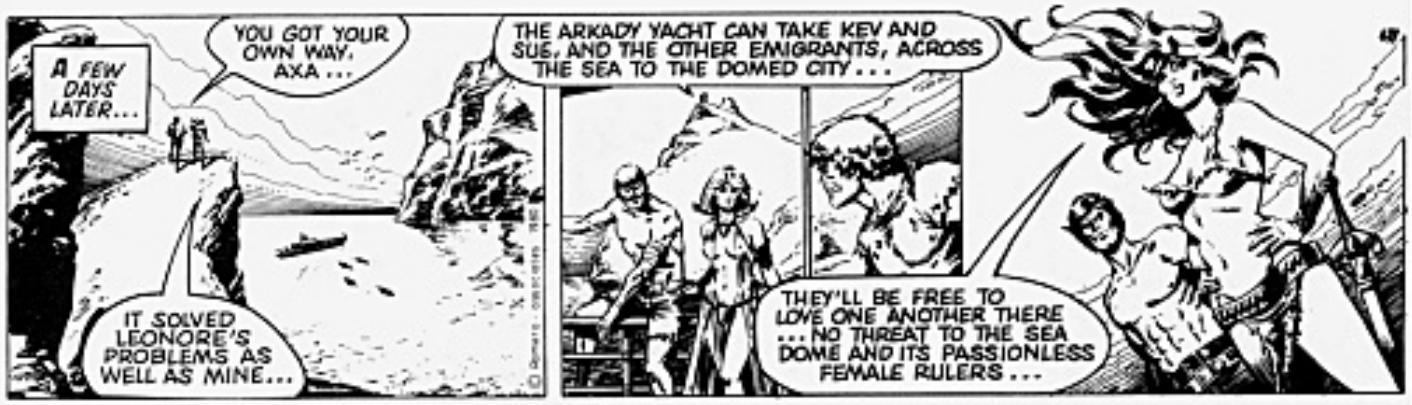
HELP ME, AXA!
I... CAN'T...
SAME DEATH FOR BOTH OF US, SWEETHEART... THE RULER AND THE RULED...
YOU COULDN'T HAVE SAVED HER, AXA... OR ANY OF THOSE OTHER POOR DEVILS THE CONTROLLER DROWNED WITH A TOUCH OF THE BUTTON...
469
ROMERO

THERE WERE FIFTY MEN IN THAT DOME SECTION YOU FLOODED, LEONORE... AND YOU WIPED THEM OUT IN COLD BLOOD...
THEY WEREN'T JUST MEN... THEY WERE REBELS...
AND INGRID... YOUR DEPUTY CONTROLLER... YOUR FRIEND? DID SHE HAVE TO DIE TOO?
470

I TRIED TO WARN INGRID. SHE WAS TOO ANGRY TO LISTEN. A RULER MUST LEARN FIRST TO RULE HERSELF
INGRID HATED MEN. I SIMPLY REQUIRE OBEDIENCE FROM THEM
AND IF THEY DISOBEY, YOU GIVE THEM TO THE SEA... AND THE SURFERS... AND THE SHARKS...
471
ROMERO

IT'S TOO HORRIBLE! I CAN'T BEAR IT!
YOU HAVE A SOFT HEART, AXA...
... A LUXURY THAT A RULER CANNOT AFFORD...
472
ROMERO

ALL RIGHT... THE REBELS HAD TO DIE, FOR THE SAFETY OF THE SEA DOME...
BUT THEY'D NEVER HAVE REBELLED IN THE FIRST PLACE IF YOU HADN'T DRIVEN THEM TO IT!
IF YOU TREAT MEN LIKE BRUTES, THAT'S THE WAY THEY'LL BEHAVE!
YOU MAY BE RIGHT, AXA. PERHAPS WE SHOULD READJUST THE POWER-RATIO BETWEEN THE SEXES IN THE SEA-DOME...
BUT WOMEN MUST STILL RULE. THE WHOLE HISTORY AND ETHOS OF THE DOME DEMAND IT
WE CAN GIVE MEN MORE FREEDOM, POSSIBLY...
TO LOVE US? TO BE LOVED BY US?
SUE! THE GIRL THEY PUNISHED FOR LOVING THE MAN KEV!
HE'S HERE, AXA! HE TOOK NO PART IN THE REBELLION!
HE ONLY WANTS JUSTICE
NO! I WANT SUE!
IMPOSSIBLE! WE CANNOT ALLOW EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN THE SEA DOME!
THEN LET KEV AND SUE LEAVE THE SEA DOME, CONTROLLER! WITH ALL THE COUPLES LIKE THEM, WHO LOVE EACH OTHER!
REMEMBER WHY I CAME HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?
OF COURSE! YOU BROUGHT A MESSAGE FROM YOUR OWN DOMED CITY, ACROSS THE SEA!
MY PEOPLE NEED EMIGRANTS TO IMPROVE THEIR STOCK! MEN AND WOMEN OF STRENGTH AND PURPOSE!
MEN LIKE KEV... WOMEN LIKE SUE...


A FEW DAYS LATER...
YOU GOT YOUR OWN WAY, AXA...
IT SOLVED LEONORE'S PROBLEMS AS WELL AS MINE...
THE ARKADY YACHT CAN TAKE KEV AND SUE, AND THE OTHER EMIGRANTS, ACROSS THE SEA TO THE DOMED CITY...
THEY'LL BE FREE TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER THERE ...NO THREAT TO THE SEA DOME AND ITS PASSIONLESS FEMALE RULERS...

BUT YOU'RE NOT RETURNING HOME YOURSELF, AXA, TO THE DOMED CITY?
NO, LOVE IS ENOUGH FOR KEV AND SUE. I WANT MORE OUT OF LIFE
KNOWLEDGE? POWER? ADVENTURE?
I'LL KNOW WHEN I FIND IT...

BUT MY LAST LINK WITH THE PAST HAS GONE...
MINE TOO, AXA... AND I'M COMING WITH YOU... BUT WHERE ARE WE HEADING FOR?
THE FUTURE...

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